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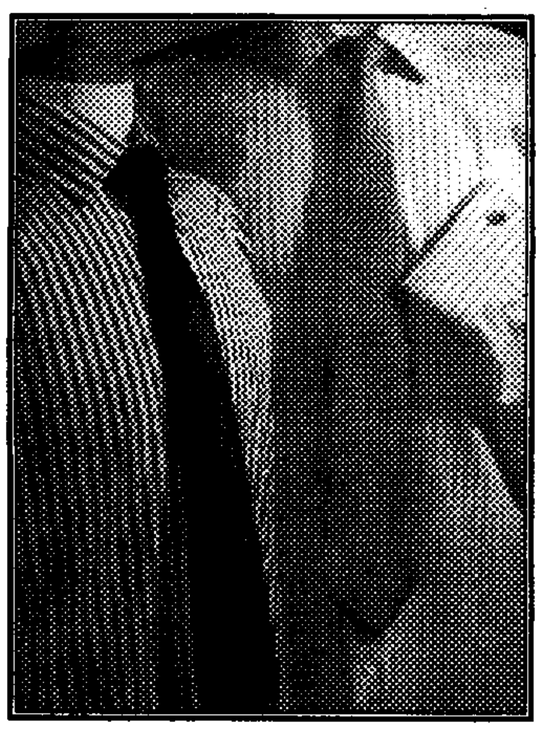

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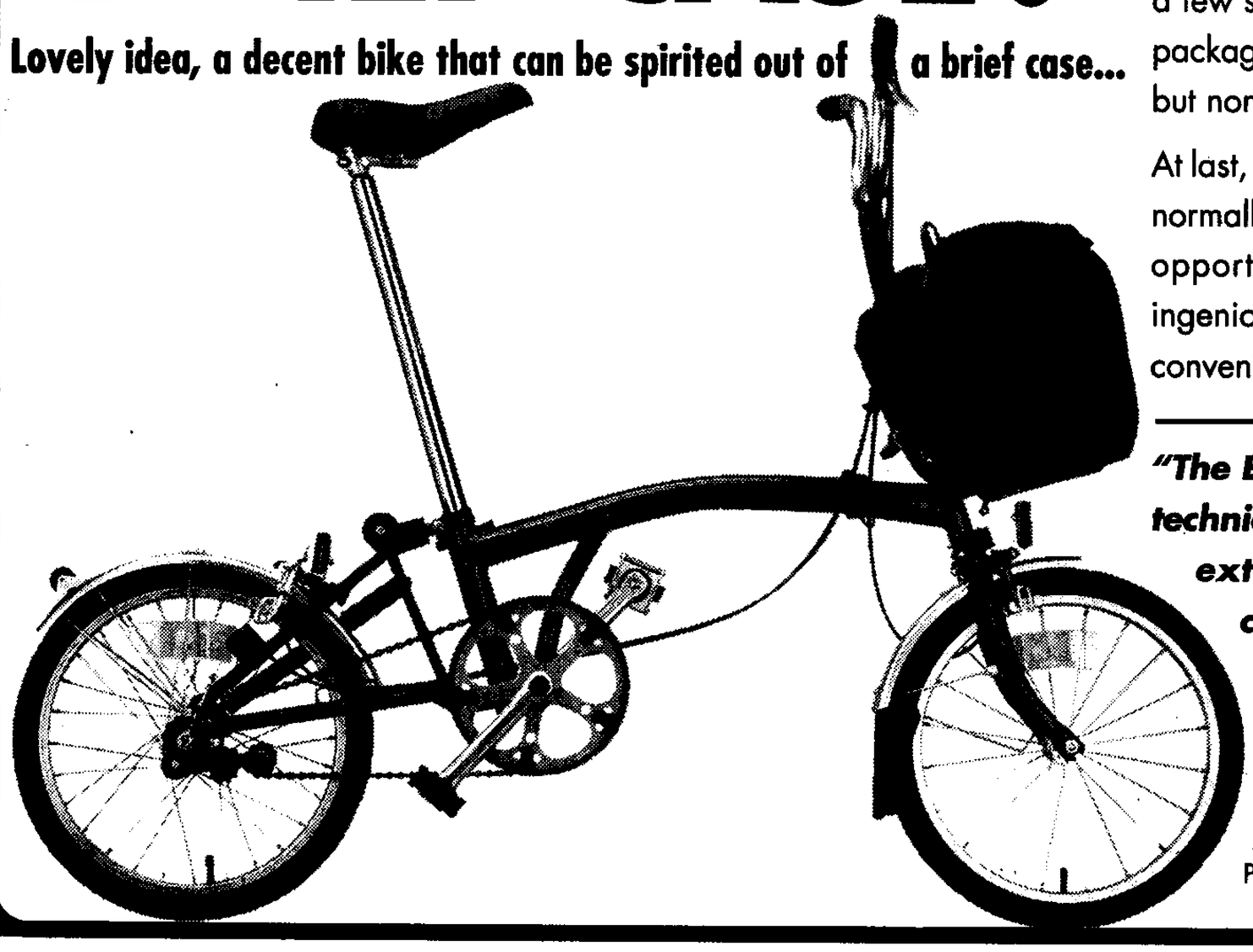

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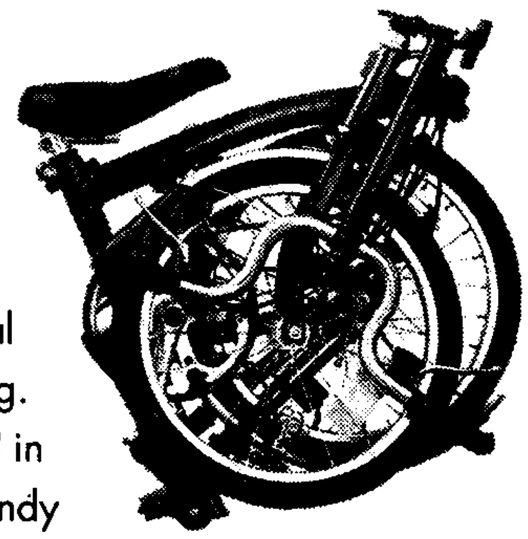

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BROMPTON

Gnome

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I AM indeed honoured to have been chosen once again as the most popular person in the universe by an independent poll of listeners to the prestigious BBC "Toady" Programme.

The votes cast were in many ways humbling for a mere businessman and philanthropist, but nonetheless I feel it is only fair to record them in full:

1. Lord Gnome	17,478
2. Mother Teresa of Calcutta	307
3. Dempsey the Dog	98
4. John Humphrys	72
5. Wallace and Gromit (Joint)	24
6. Her Majesty the Queen Mother	19
7. Chris Evans	17
8. Child B	8
9. Princess Diana	7
10. His Holiness the Pope	6
11. John Major	0

Sad to say, there are always bad losers and rumours have begun to circulate that all the votes for myself came from a single telephone number in my office. Let me put the record straight. I can assure listeners that I made no calls to Radio 4 myself nor did I threaten my staff with instant dismissal if they failed to spend their entire Christmas holiday ringing up the BBC and voting for me.

E. Strobes
pp. Lord Gnome
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London W1N

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COLOUR SECTION

KENT's chief constable, David Phillips, is in a spot of bother over the curious case of his chauffeur, PC Robert Paling.

Mr Paling was stopped by Hertfordshire traffic cop Gary Dixon because his blue Jaguar was doing 110mph on the M1. Paling was charged with speeding and appeared in December at Hemel Hempstead magistrates' court. PC Dixon told the court Paling was in civilian clothes and had never mentioned the fact that he was a policeman.

PC Paling told a different story. He said he told the traffic cop at once that he was a police officer and was driving the chief constable of Kent home after a lecture at Loughborough University. Mr Paling told the court Mr Phillips had told him to "put his foot down" on the way home, and that he was only obeying orders.

This defence impressed magistrates who gave Mr Paling an absolute discharge: no ban, no fine, no penalty points; not even a reprimand. A curious feature of the case was the absence of any evidence from the VIP passenger in the car, chief constable Phillips himself. He appears to have been paralysed by an uncharacteristic dumbness both when his car was stopped and when his chauffeur was dragged off to court.

TOUGH luck for anyone living in West Yorkshire who doesn't have a car and who wanted to visit relatives or friends — or go to church — on Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

Thoughtful bus company FirstBus cancelled all services for both days, just after increasing fares and chopping some buses altogether. FirstBus — with a 20 percent increase in pre-tax profits to more than £14 million for the six months up to September — has now ordered its West Yorkshire companies to increase profit margins from 11 percent to 18 percent.

It's said that what happens on the buses today will happen on the railways tomorrow. But never mind — there'll be another privatisation along in a minute...

THE Campaign to Rubbish Scott (CARS) — chairman, Lord Howe — goes into overdrive as the Scott report finally looms.

Apart from a few minor matters relating to the recent Ordtech hearings in the appeal court, the report is ready for the printer and is expected to be packed off there before the next issue of the *Eye* appears. Publication, which is entirely in the hands of Sir Richard Scott (and out of the hands of the government), is expected in the first week of February.

Lord Howe's campaign got a big boost at the end of November from the "gagging Ministers" — those who had signed the notorious "public immunity certificates" refusing the three defendants in the Matrix Churchill trial the information they needed for their defence.

All these ministers — among them serving cabinet members Malcolm Rifkind, Kenneth Clarke and Peter Lilley — got their confidential drafts of what Scott has to say about the gagging and were delighted to discover that the judge lets them off with mild rebukes, blaming the law (and the doomed attorney-general Sir Nicholas Lyell) for instructing ministers to "form a view" from papers they were not allowed to see.

This news was first reported by the BBC and the *Guardian*. A couple of weeks later, the ministers leaked their confidential reports to their favourite newspapers, starting with the *Daily Telegraph* and ending with a front-page splash in the *Sunday Telegraph*. All this has been carefully orchestrated by the Campaign to Rubbish Scott in the hope that the lenient approach of the judge to the gagging may deflect attention from his not-so-lenient view of lying to parliament and cover-up and deception by the legal authorities and the civil service.

Clarke, Rifkind and Lilley may hang on to their jobs, but Lyell, Waldegrave, Mayhew and even the secretary to the cabinet, Sir Robin Butler, may not.

SHY and retiring Jeremy Hayes, Tory MP for Harlow in Essex, was enjoying a quick four-hour pre-Christmas lunch at London restaurant Giovanni's when he heard his name mentioned at another table.

The politician and co-star of the dire *James Whale Show* thought he was in the presence of admirers and shambled over — not realising he was gatecrashing a festive lunch for trade union officials. Hayes introduced himself to the table as "Jerry" and draped his arm across a nearby nubile female.

When the MP realised he was among the enemy he quickly went to pieces. Jabbing his finger in the air he informed the sniggering diners that Messrs Portillo and Lilley were "shits" and that he had gone into politics "to help the unemployed and homeless".

The roaring trade unionists asked what Hayes was going to do if he lost his seat at the next election. "I will make a fucking fortune out of the media just like I made a fucking fortune before I became an MP," stormed the irate MP. "Do you think I do this fucking job for money?"

Eventually the bearded Tory flounced off in a huff shouting: "I will never discuss politics with you pricks again."

AS THE wretched David Ashby MP slumps into ruin after his gloriously inept libel action against the *Sunday Times*, many wondered how the MP, a barrister himself, could possibly have decided to issue a writ in the first place and then have proceeded to take it to court.

Perhaps his solicitor knows. One Peter Carter-Ruck, no less.

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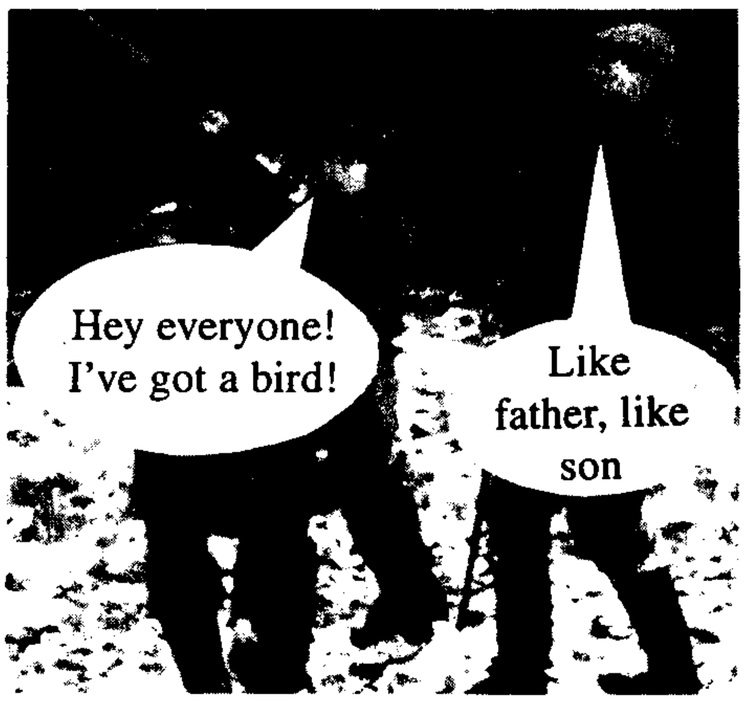
ROYAL SHOCK



Street of Shame

RICHARD BRANSON must be gratified by the enthusiastic coverage he has received from the *Times* during his argument with Guy Snowden of G-Tech over whether or not he was offered an alleged "bribe".

The paper even managed to produce a new witness who backed Branson's story. "Mr Branson's account of the lunch was corroborated by his friend Dr Peter Emerson, the former dean of Westminster medical school, who said he had told him about it two days later," it revealed. "Dr Emerson said that Mr Branson had no doubts that Mr Snowden had been trying to bribe him."

No other newspaper followed up this great scoop — perhaps because, since Dr Emerson wasn't present at the lunch, his evidence is merely hearsay. But the *Times* thought it important enough to report prominently on the front page.

It neglected, however, to mention one tiny detail: Dr Peter Emerson is the father-in-law of one Peter Stothard, editor of *The Times*.

MEDIA pundits have been reading the *Daily Express*'s leader column to see what direction suave, bespectacled new editor Richard Addis intends to take the flagging tabloid. So they were shocked to see, only days after his arrival, a leader headed "Scoring a point".

It recorded the success of the Varsity rugby match at Twickenham and recommended that MPs should attend the event. "One suspects they would be less pestiferous away from the Commons than in it," the leader droned. Unfortunately the smoothie editor's early attempts will not have scored any points. He obviously had not noticed that on page two his paper had noted the unfortunate demise of the 19-stone former government whip, Sir David Lightbown — attending the Twickenham match.

NEW *Mirror* editor Piers "Boy" Morgan is presiding over a dazzling renaissance in British journalism. So when black female group "Eternal" flew to Rome for a gig at the Vatican, micro-skirted pop editor Kate "Lobotomy" Thornton was assigned to this top story.

In Rome, Kate proved that jibes about her over-promotion from secretary were completely baseless. Confronted with His Holiness's top aide, la "Lobotomy" fearlessly asked the big one: "Is the Pope married — and if so, what's his wife's name?"

Meanwhile Christmas in Manchester took a bizarre turn when the paper's legendary deputy Brendon "Chucky" Parsons left instructions in the night-log for a reporter to dress up as Father Christmas and test whether it was still possible to slide down the famous chimneys of Manchester.

This job was scrapped by treacherous underlings who complained that most *Mirror* hacks are so overfed the fire brigade would probably have to be summoned to unstick them. Yes, it was another *Mirror* turkey.

MAX "Hitler" Hastings, the new editor of the *Evening Standard*, got rid of associate editor and political and media commentator, Stephen Glover.

As soon as Hitler was appointed in the autumn colleagues assumed Glover's card was marked because he had repeatedly written that the *Daily Torygraph* had lost its soul under the editorship of Hastings. Although Hitler stated in an awkward meeting with Glover that he bore him no grudge, he intimated to departing editor Stewart Steven he thought Glover should "play the white man" and resign.

However, when Glover indicated he would be happy to go if he were paid off, Hitler refused. It was only after Steven and Sir David English, Associated Newspapers chairman, insisted that Hastings could not treat a senior executive in this way, that Glover got his bung. His replacement as political commentator is the scintillating Ann Applebore (*Shurely "Abblebaum"? Ed.*)

Meanwhile Hastings's pathetic show of malice against Glover has been seen elsewhere. A few years ago Glover was being entertained in Brooks's, the club in St James's, by a friend who suggested he might care to join. Glover agreed, knowing it would take a couple of years to go through. Shortly before Christmas his name was posted as being about to go before the membership committee. It was spotted by club bore Hastings, who made it clear to the club secretary he would blackball Glover if his name went forward. Glover wisely withdrew.

FOR FAR too many years Woodrow Wyatt's "Voice of Reason" column has been inflicted on baffled readers of the *News of the Screws* at the express command of Rupert Murdoch.

But at least readers in Ireland are now spared this ordeal: before leaving the paper, Piers Morgan managed to persuade his born-again proprietor to replace Wyatt in the Irish editions with a column by Father Pat Buckley, a dissident Catholic priest. Father Pat's "Voice From the Pulpit" jottings now give spiritual solace to readers on both sides of the Irish border — including one Mian Khalid.

A thirtysomething native of Kashmir, Khalid arrived in Belfast from Scotland and began working in a kebab bar. In his free time, he managed to form a relationship with a 50-year-old local woman, Henrietta Phillips — and last year, within three months of meeting, they were married by an unsuspecting Father Pat.

Alas! The journo-priest, whose views on marriage and similar subjects differ sharply from those of the Vatican, was not to know that the groom had gone through a similar ceremony in Scotland the year before, and that this marriage had not been dissolved. Khalid could perhaps have been forgiven for letting that happy event slip his mind, as he had spent most of the marriage in prison, accused of immigration offences. Indeed Ballymena crown court, which imposed a six-month jail term for bigamy and a deportation order, heard that the groom was actually on the run when the second wedding took place.

However, there was one consolation for the luckless Khalid. Although the *News of the Screws* seldom misses a chance to fulminate about immigrant wedding scams, on this particular case it has been strangely silent.

THE *News of the World*'s motor correspondent Mike Rutherford annoyed Inspector Knacker with his recent effort headed COPS' M-WAY MADNESS.

The article claimed that on the day that there was a multiple pile-up in thick fog, the police had kept motorway warning signs turned off.

Rutherford's story was illustrated with an interesting photo of a motorway captioned: "M2 has dozens of warning signs... shame they were off in the fog." The photo showed three of the said warning signs within a very short stretch of road. The only problem was that two of the signs do not exist — wily photo massagers had added on the extra electronic signs to illustrate how plentiful the signals are and how lax the police had been.

MARINA BAKER, the Londoner's Diary hackette who recently posed nude for *Time Out*, has been counselling Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood in the Groucho Club.

The other night a member wandered into the gentleman's lavatory just after the bar had closed at 1am to find Wood peeing into a urinal and next to him, standing with her back towards another urinal and also peeing, the *Evening Standard*'s finest.

"What are you doing, Marina?" he asked. She explained that Ronnie was of the opinion that men had an advantage over women because they are able to pee while standing up, and she had decided to prove him wrong.

Baker and Wood then disappeared into one of the sealed cubicles and lingered there for almost half an hour. When she was later quizzed as to whether medicinal powders or homeopathic body fluids had been consumed, Marina waxed lyrical. "All Ronnie wanted to do was chat about how his old dad used to run a market stall in the East End." La Baker's canonisation cannot be far off.

CHRISTMAS PARTY ROUND-UP

STEWART Steven's leaving party at the V&A was marred by an unseemly incident involving his successor, Max Hastings, and Scotland's ambassador to the *Evening Standard*, bibulous news hack Colin Adamson.

With a reputation for fearlessness (he once signed in at the Associated Newspapers security desk, having mislaid his pass in a hostelry, as "Abu Nidal", adding that the purpose of his visit was "terrorism"), he approached Hitler and proceeded to berate him over his role as a reporter for the *Standard* in the Falklands war.

Although barely comprehensible even when sober, Adamson was nonetheless able to convey the gist of his complaint to his new editor — namely that he, Adamson, had been bumped from the Falklands assignment by Hastings and that had this not happened he too might have edited the *Daily Telegraph* for ten years.

Hastings told the tired and emotional hack to "get out of my face" and Philip Evans, one of the *Standard*'s under-employed senior editors, hustled Adamson away. Hitler, meanwhile, sought the paper's deputy editor Peter Boyer, indignantly explained what had happened and told him to deal with the matter. Hastings has since decreed that if Adamson should ever be tired and emotional in the office, he will be sacked.

NEW *Express* editor Richard Addiss has been deeply impressed by his staff's behaviour at a piss-up for the paper's old guard at The Ivy restaurant.

Heather "Hysterical" McGlone — demoted from number three and placed on two months' trial — put on a particularly fine display. First she attended the do at The Ivy where she conspicuously snubbed former boss "Sir" Nicholas Lloyd, the man responsible for her inexplicable rise.

Then, returning legless to the *Express*, "Hysterical" locked herself in the lavatory. No amount of knocking, pleas or shouting could rouse her, and after an hour security people were forced to "unhinge" the doors and "help" the distressed executive back to her office.

Here she was finally woken by ex-columnist Phillipa Kennedy, who harangued Heather for turning her back on Sir Nick, the man who had made her "career". Rising unsteadily, "Hysterical" pointed a finger and howled at Kennedy: "You're drunk!"

VINCENT GRAFF, diminutive and swarthy sub-editor of the *Evening Standard*'s Londoner's Diary, finally came up with a *bon mot* talking to Suzanne Moore, the *Grauniad* columnist, after she fell on a wet pavement after the *Standard* features, arts and media party: "Suzanne, I told you not to wear those fuck-me shoes."

LADY LLOYD, alias "retired" *Sunday Express* editor Eve Bollard, was also overheard during the party season discussing the Inland Revenue and the prospect of her being investigated now she is a freelance journalist and author.

"Sometimes I think these people investigate you just so they can get to meet you."

VERY NORTHERN COMEDIAN

FOCUS ON PAULA YATES

"I FOUND this book extremely difficult to write," Paula Yates reveals on the opening page of her autobiography. "When you've spent most of your life trying to keep secrets, it's not easy suddenly to reveal all."

She has made her task slightly easier, however, by dispensing with the tiresome necessity of telling the truth.

Take the section beginning on page 22 where she describes how, as an eight-year-old wasting away from anorexia, she developed "every chest complaint know to the medical profession. Gallons of snot emanated from my body like ectoplasm... My weight eventually plunged so low, and my snot threatened to reach Cardiff, that I was carted off to hospital 40 miles away."

Yates recalls her eight-week stay at the hospital in impressive detail. She shared a ward with three other children — "all spawns of the devil as far as I could ascertain": there was Cara, "who always had a tube up her nose"; Rory, who "had had most of his bones broken after being thrown against a wall by his father during a drunken rage"; and Rachel, who had "run out from behind an ice-cream van straight into a Volvo and broken her leg".

Actually the hospital she is so careful not to mention — the Abergele Chest Unit in North Wales — dealt only with chest complaints and cases of TB, so anyone with a broken leg would not have been there. Cara, Rory and Rachel did not exist. Yates was in a ward with seven children: three Susans, an Alice, two Jimmies and an Anwen. They had to be up and dressed when appropriate and teachers came in to ensure they didn't fall behind with their lessons. All quite normal: too normal, it seems, for Yates's exotic tastes.

"My head was tipped up so that my feet were close to the ceiling," she writes, "and my head was about a foot off the ground, then I was strapped in to prevent me falling on my head." Pure fantasy, according to her old room-mates.

To cap things off nicely, Yates claims to have been thoroughly and intimately molested by a male nurse every night. When she asked her mother whether this was normal, the poor woman "ran shrieking out of the room and across the lawn outside". How strange no one else recalls any such ructions on any visiting day.

"The nurse, it transpired, had a record as long as a draught-excluder for child molestation, so he was duly packed off somewhere." Er, not quite. A spokeswoman at Abergele confirmed last week that no nurse at the hospital has ever been sacked or suspended for sexual abuse of children. "She's a silly girl," the source added. "But anyway, she's making money. I wish I could make money that easily..."

The prosaic reality is that she spent a couple of months in hospital and then went home. The only "spawn of the devil" in the ward was Yates herself. "She was very precocious, always talking about make-up," one fellow-patient told the *Eye*. "She said she wanted to be famous." And, for once, she was telling the truth.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! MY BASHFUL chum Denis Healey — that's Lord Healey to you — has been lending his imposing presence to a new television drama, *The Lord of Misrule*.

Alas, since becoming a television star — with tremendous appearances by his eyebrows in Thresher and Sainsbury's adverts — the man who should have been Labour leader has grown rather big for his socialist boots and has been turning into the most frightful luvvie.

He recently astonished crew members by sitting in his trailer, refusing to come out and film, and shouting abuse at whoever dared approach him. After reducing his own assistant to tears, the elder statesman repeatedly yelled "You fucking cunt" at the show's horrified producer and ordered him to pay him £1,000 and not the £500 agreed.

As the insults streamed on, the producer offered Healey a taxi-cab home rather than put up with this tantrum. However, the abuse continued and the exasperated producer eventually asked "who the fuck do you think you are?" The renowned diplomat was momentarily silenced and then began to slag off the entire media. "All of you get paid for sitting round on your arses all day."

He then ruined this observation by saying that he would rather be sitting in the House of Lords. Eventually he agreed to £650 and went on to give a delightful performance onscreen. And to think he could have been Prime Minister!

HALLO! THE South African court of saintly president Nelson Mandela is abuzz: why exactly has dear Mark Thatcher been given residential rights?

The criteria specify that applicants must have high educational qualifications, unique skills — or pots and pots of money. Presumably Mark qualifies on the last count. But there is also a strict ban on applicants with criminal records or serious trials pending.

Mark escaped "racketeering" charges in Texas by paying his accuser a reputed £500,000, but the US revenue service is still pursuing the small matter of £1.7 million in unpaid taxes, for which Mark still faces trial.

Perhaps Nelson took into account the Thatcher boy's promise to create employment in Cape Town: to service his £570,000 six bedroomed mansion in (whites only) Constantia, he has hired three (not-white) retainers.

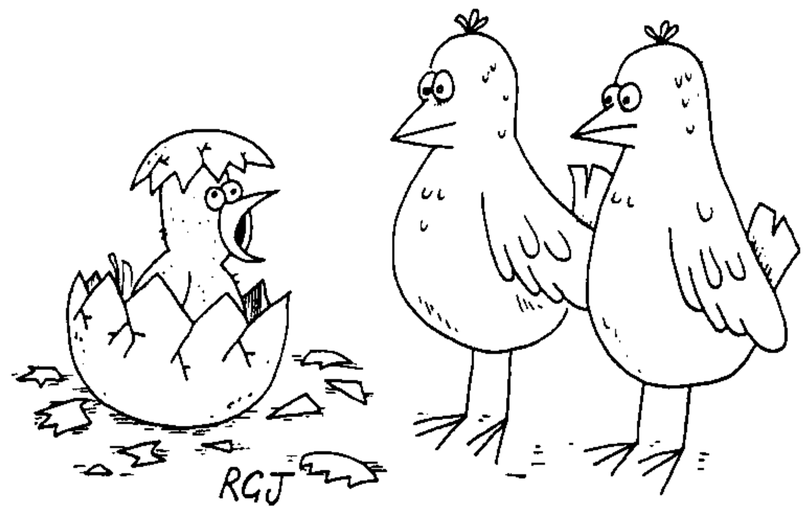
HALLO! A NIGHTMARE unfolded for first-class passengers trapped recently on a Manchester to London Inter-City with the famous "writer" Frances Edmonds, wife of former test cricketer, Phil.

La "Foghorn" was with her small daughter Alexandra and a Spanish friend, holding forth and singing. After two hours, one traveller finally cracked and begged her to be quiet.

"*Who* are you?" demanded Edmonds, before remarking loudly: "A sad act... wearing sunglasses on her head like a South African... too much make-up..."

When another passenger then demanded silence, the carriage erupted into tumultuous applause.

As the train pulled into Euston, Edmonds produced an A4 pad and approached this impertinent person. "I am Frances Edmonds," she announced. "I write for the *Daily Mail*." It shows.



"Mum... Dad... I've decided to come out"

HALLO! WILL the Princess of Wales ever find happiness? Not only did she spend Christmas alone with her ego, but she has had to put up with ludicrous headlines linking her to "property millionaire" Christopher Whalley.

Whalley, who does up flats and has a mobile phone, is so "eligible" he has even been out with Amanda Platell, hatchet-bimbo in chief to *Mirror* boss David Montgomery. But the thought that he has been to Uganda with the Princess of Wales has had them guffawing in the changing rooms of the Harbour Club, where Whalley now hangs his tennis racquet.

This rumour was about on a par with the one that had Di discussing East Africa with her hairdresser, Sam McKnight. This one started in New York just before Christmas where, away from the limelight of banquets with fawning old men like Rupert Murdoch and Henry Kissinger, Diana attended a discreet lunch organised by her friend Liz Tilberis, editor of *Harper's Bazaar*. Tilberis invited the Hearsts, Randolph and Veronica, but had no idea whom to invite as a spare man without precipitating a frenzy of speculation. She thought a crimper would do the trick — but such is Diana's reputation people will now believe her capable of conducting secret love trysts with just about anyone.

'The Marquesa'

HOUSE & GARDEN

GRAYDON Carter, well-upholstered editor of *Vanity Fair*, has been the subject of some controversy since his New York apartment was photographed for another Condé Nast publication, *House & Garden*.

H&G — whose features editor Liz Elliot happens to be married to Henry Porter, who is employed by Carter as the *Vanity Fair* London editor — soon received a fax, however, complaining that a valuable rug had been ripped during the shoot and demanding satisfaction.

The photographer in charge denied that any rug in Carter's flat had been damaged by him or his team. *House & Garden* found themselves in a terrific quandary. Graydon E. Carter (mischievously nicknamed 'Gradeone E. Asshole') could not possibly be lying. But then nor could the impeccably bred nobby snapper Christopher Simon Sykes. What to do? *H&G* editor Sue Crewe courageously agreed to reimburse her fellow Condé Nast editor so Gradeone now has a delightful new rug.

United Kingdom, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Road Safety

1996. Year of the Young Driver. European Commission.

AGAINST the advice of Gillian Shephard, secretary of state for education, John Major has decided to make education the "big issue" for the new year.

Irritated by the continued refusal of parents to vote for their schools to "opt out" of local authority control (in the year to 1 September 1995, 18,087 parents voted against opt-out; 17,322 for), Major has come up with an original solution: abolish the ballot.

In the year left to him he plans to bribe or force all schools to opt out and has told Mrs Shephard that if she doesn't like the idea he will find someone who does. To show he means business he has already ordered all religious schools to go on a fast track to opt-out — a move which has succeeded in uniting Catholics, Jews and the Church of England in unanimous opposition.

FOR the second by-election running, champions of local miners have been excluded by the Labour hierarchy from contesting the safe seat of Hemsworth in West Yorkshire.

In 1990 the National Union of Mineworkers' Ken Capstick was ruled out in favour of Latin scholar Derek Enright. Now the NUM's Steve Kemp has been elbowed aside to give the seat to Leeds city council leader Jon Trickett.

Trickett is seen as a safe pair of hands by Labour's NEC, but it was not always so. He entered the council as a militant left-winger with a trade union background. During Tony Benn's deputy leadership challenge to Denis Healey in 1981 it was none other than tricky Jon who chaired Benn's 1,000 strong campaign rally in Leeds town hall. How times change.

HOME secretary Michael Howard has found a slimy way to save £25,000 a year — demoting or regrading 10 young fingerprint experts at the Asylum Fingerprint Bureau, part of the Immigration Nationality Department in Croydon.

Just before sitting down to their Christmas lunch on 12 December they were told the home office had decided they were not £14,909-a-year assistant identification officers after all. New contracts will specify that they are administrative officers earning just £12,036 a year — a cut of £2,873 a year.

While the savings may be enough to cover the annual petrol bill of Howard's ministerial limo, the immigration building Lunar House will soon undergo £30 million worth of refurbishment once quantity surveyors Gardiner and Theobald have completed their consultancy work.

JOHN BUTCHER, Tory MP for Coventry, does not mince words when dealing with today's aberrant young. "In the old fashioned way, a slob or a yob got a slap in the gob," he thundered recently to his local paper, the *Evening Telegraph.*

"Unfortunately, slobs and yobs have not had a smack in the gob for a few years now," he added.

John's own son Ben, 19, has himself just been given a mild smack in the gob by Coventry magistrates: a community service order and two-year driving ban for having drunk five pints, borrowed dad's Daimler without permission (or insurance), and crashed into some traffic lights, which were demolished.

No doubt the local MP will have something to say about the lax sentence.

IN *Eye* 881 (22 September) we noted the tremendous PR job done for natural gas in two of the four pages of a report by the transport group of the prestigious fat cat quango, the Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment.

The *Eye* remarked that the chairman of the group was Cedric Brown, chairman of British Gas. The committee's views were obviously very influential in high places: one of the most surprising beneficiaries of the recent budget was the natural gas industry which could not contain its delight at an unexpected cut in duty of 15 per cent.

'Backbiter'

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

CIVIL servants in the European Union have broken the cosy relationship they normally maintain with their political masters in a row over nepotism.

The "committee of the regions" is an EU quango set up under the Maastricht treaty to bring European institutions closer to the people — who in turn pay £14 million a year for the pleasure. Those who sit on the committee — and they include MEPs as well as local councillors — have caused normally docile civil servants to strike in disgust.

Why? First, because the committee president Jacques Blanc brought French colleagues with him to Brussels thus taking the jobs of civil servants. Then committee member Sir Peter Bowness, leader of Croydon council, found a cosy admin job for a chum from England — Oliver Allan, who now

"It's the quota that got away"

earns £35,000 a year net. And Irish MEP Gerry Collins, also a committee member, found his young nephew Michael a similarly cushy post.

None of these chummy admin jobs has been advertised, which isn't really fair on the career civil servants who have faced stringent exams and rigorous interviews and are understandably miffed — particularly for their 1,700 associates who have passed the proper admission procedures and are waiting haplessly on reserve lists for EU jobs.

WORLD OF THINK-TANKS

STRANGE things are afoot in the incestuous world of Westminster think-tanks.

This usually tranquil grove of mock-academe, populated by nerds and boffins who pride themselves on "thinking the unthinkable", was shaken a few weeks ago by the sacking of Gerald Frost, head of the Thatcherite Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) since 1990.

To universal astonishment, he was replaced by Tessa Keswick, a rich but dim former adviser to Kenneth Clarke. (Tessa's husband, former *Spectator* owner Henry Keswick, is the multi-millionaire chairman of Matheson & Co.)

Keswick's appointment was a particular surprise to Sheila Lawlor, the CPS's director of studies. Not only would she have expected to be offered the top job herself, but she was also nearing the completion of her plan to launch a new right-wing think tank in partnership with her old chum... Tessa Keswick. Lawlor duly left and launched her new venture, the impenetrably-named Politeia, taking with her the backing of CPS stalwarts such as Lord Parkinson, Viscount Cranbourne, Oliver Letwin and David Willetts MP. Without Keswick's promised financial assistance, however, she has had to lower her expectations slightly, setting up shop in dingy offices in the Charing Cross Road.

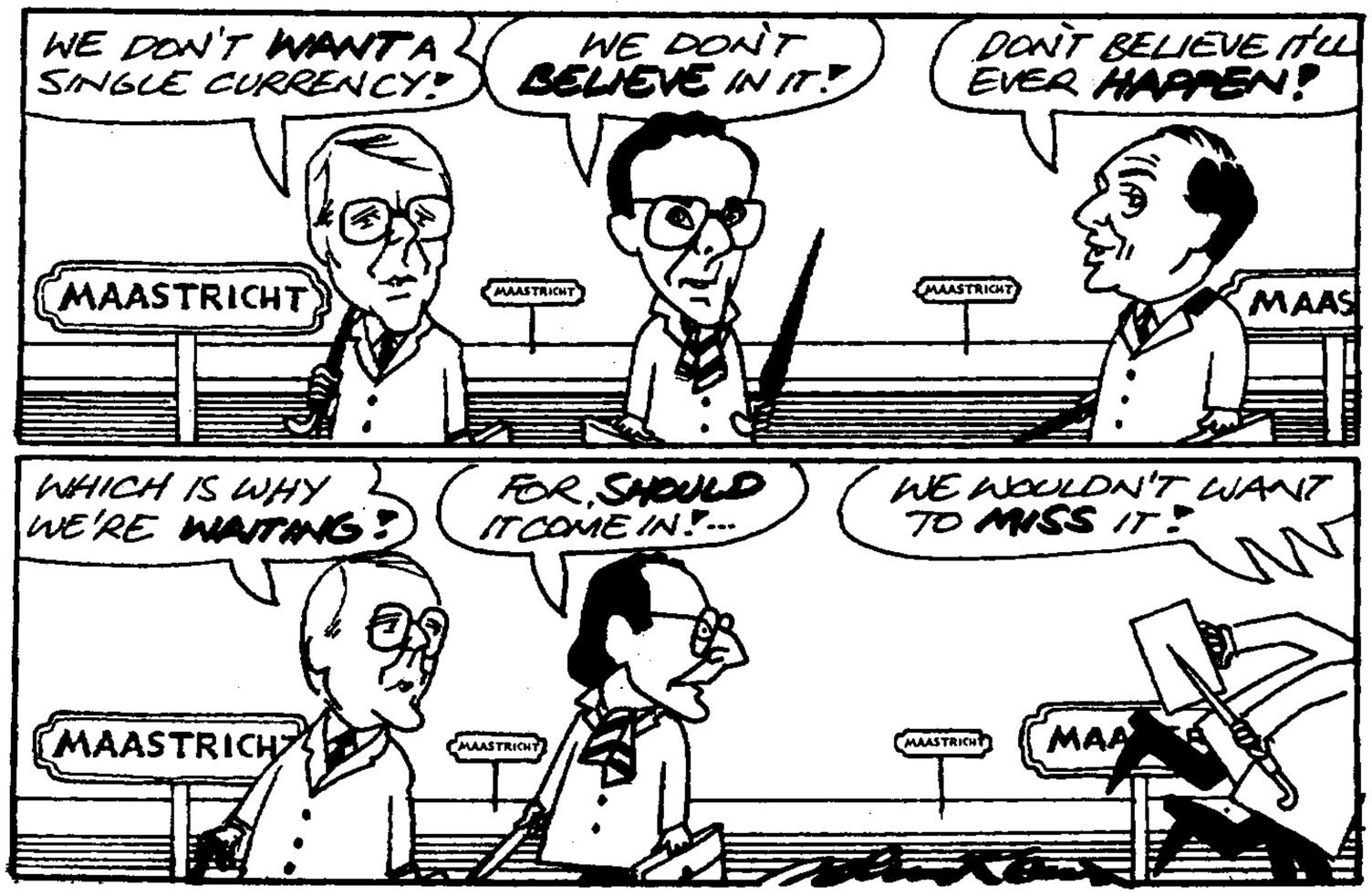
Meanwhile an equally bitter struggle for succession is under way at the Social Market Foundation (SMF), the think-tank founded by David Owen which tries to flog ideas to both Tories and Labour. The SMF's director, Danny Finkelstein, was headhunted during the summer to become director of the Conservative party's research department, where he has already made his presence felt by persuading the irascible party chairman Brian Mawhinney to adopt as the new Tory campaign anthem the theme tune from *An Officer and a Gentleman* — "Love lifts you up where you belong" (which is more than the government has ever managed to do).

The vacuum left by Finkelstein at the SMF is currently filled by his girthsome deputy, Rick Nye, who had been favourite to be the permanent replacement. But he had reckoned without Stephen Pollard, the chubby, bespectacled and maverick research director of the Fabian Society.

Pollard, a former adviser to Peter Shore, is a fanatical Euro-sceptic who supports grammar schools, education vouchers and private health insurance. Understandably enough he is ostracised on the left, so much so that his latest pamphlet was deemed unpublishable even by his own employers, the Fabian Society.

Pollard promptly took his tract round to the Social Market Foundation and persuaded Rick Nye to publish it instead, thereby reaping tremendous publicity. The two were so pleased with this success that they began talking of a more permanent alliance: when Nye became director, Pollard could escape his Labourite prison and be head of research. But, just as Tessa Keswick changed her plans and forgot to tell Sheila Lawlor, so Pollard has now decided to apply for the SMF director's job himself, leap-frogging over his pal Nye.

The SMF's chairman, the self-important academic Lord Skidelsky, is likely to resign if Pollard gets the job. Meanwhile, the SMF's financial backers (who are trying to buy influence, not chaos) are ready to switch their allegiance to another think-tank — though not, presumably, Politeia or the Centre for Policy Studies.



NOOKS and CORNERS

IT IS difficult, I know, to have much sympathy for lawyers. But try to imagine the feelings of students at the Cambridge Law Faculty at being moved from the old Squire Law Library to their new "masterpiece" by Sir Norman Foster & Partners.

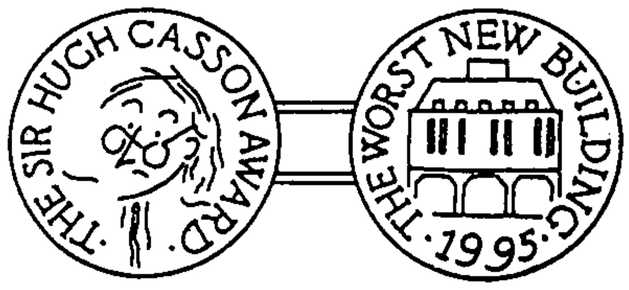
The old building is one of the finest in Cambridge, a noble stone Classical pile by Cockerell with calm, ordered, vaulted interiors. The new building is, well, a sort of long glazed sheath which lies beyond the Cam next to the celebrated History Faculty building.

Curiously enough history is repeating itself: 27 years ago it was the history undergraduates who were displaced from that same building by Cockerell into the masterpiece by the late Big Jim Stirling, that posturing celebration of industrial glazing that was showered with praise by the profession and proved to be so functionally inadequate that the University of Cambridge seriously proposed demolishing it a mere 16 years later.

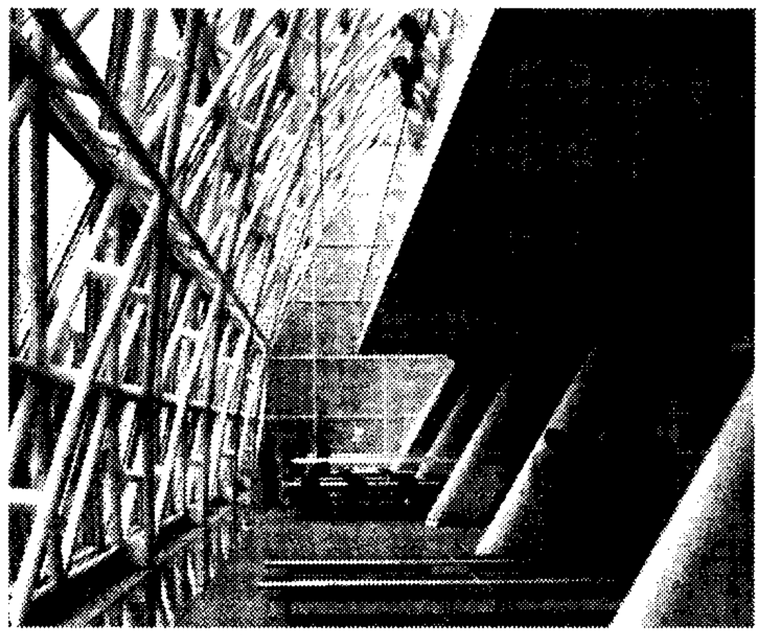
Of course these days lessons have been learned; so it surely must be certain that Sir Norman Foster's glazing will not leak; that the whole building will not vibrate when the air extractors are turned on; that it will be possible to hear one rather than three simultaneous lectures in each lecture room. Indeed, the architects claim that it is a "humane modern building which responds positively both to its surroundings and the needs of an energy-conscious client". We shall see.

Sir Norman Foster is a genius, of course: he has a knighthood to prove it. For decades he has been designing masterpieces informed by his "High Tec" view of architecture — that it is all a matter of technological solutions to functional problems. Oddly enough he has never managed to solve certain rather basic architectural problems — like creating an obvious entrance to his glazed sheaths, or how to show that an elevation is coming to an end before turning a corner.

Cockerell, or for that matter any old hack or spec builder, managed such things quite easily. But times have moved on. Instead of creating humane volumes with limiting things like brick and stone, timber and plaster, our great architects must inspire us with the possibilities of steel, wire, glass and gaskets.



The new Law Faculty is a classic Foster masterpiece. Sir Norman, or whoever in the office churns these things out, has created a long extruded half-cylinder of glass and stainless steel lying on the ground, with the northern side cut back and replaced by a vertical wall made partly of reconstituted stone. These days the Foster office has gone sort of anthropomorphic: the proposed Glasgow Conference Centre is an "armadillo" (a louse, more like); while this one is a sort of slug with the eastern end sliced off.



The other end curves to a sort of snout where this colossal scale-less object noses between poor old Stirling's History building and Casson & Conder's Arts Faculty. Mr Spencer de Grey, Foster's partner, notes that this acute corner is "sinusoidal in plan". I note that it is arbitrarily cut back, leaving the roof supported by a tall thin pole. This indicates that it is the entrance.

Inside, how exciting! Floors are stacked up on columns within a great glazed atrium: "a single, grand volume" bathed in light. Each floor ends with a long balcony, so that students can look down on the floor below. And what shows Sir Norman's touching sense of humanity is that the lively hubbub of conversation and the clink of coffee cups on the ground floor, let alone the clatter of feet on the metal staircases, can drift up to the open-plan library at the top, so making the studying students feel part of a wider community as they try and concentrate on boring old law textbooks.

One of the wonders of the architectural superstar system operated in Britain is that geniuses like Sir Norman Foster have risen to a sort of aesthetic stratosphere where they are above criticism. Fame, money and a knighthood are all, after all. And, besides, adverse comment in the journals can easily be dealt with by withdrawing permission to publish drawings and photos. So it is amazing to find that, for once, Rab Bennetts, writing in the *Architects' Journal*, tempers his praise by noting that "a library surely needs space for contemplation, concentration and silence. Unless the nature of 'library' has changed already, the relationship between the person and the book is all important and usually private. Here we find rows of readers sitting closely together at tables like a refectory... sharing an open-plan, galleried space..." Quite so.

A basic design flaw? Surely not. A work of genius that will raise the spirits of the users. How sad, therefore, to learn that the ungrateful students have been chaining bicycles to the entrance pole — to the great annoyance of the architects — and sticking up posters regardless of the careful concrete finish of the "visible in-situ columns". Now they have started vandalising the lecture rooms. As with Stirling's, great architecture is clearly wasted on these louts. Because Foster's glass slug makes the adjacent Arts Faculty court designed by Casson and Neville Conder seem a model of sophistication and elegance, it is the only possible recipient of the Casson Medal for 1995.

When Stirling's brute was awarded the RIBA's bronze medal, the History Faculty declined to screw it to the wall. I trust that someone will cut out the Casson Medal and stick it on the silicon glazing.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

Is your partner faithful to you? *Most of us put a lot of effort into relationships with our loved ones.* **We know that without some effort, bonds will break and we'll end up sad and lonely in our old age. Some of us realise, at the last moment, that things are going wrong. We call in the marriage guidance counsellor, but usually it's too late by then.**

The bond between your Brand it's (sic) target audience is just as fragile. **Building relationships with a loyal target group is the single most important goal for most brands as we head toward the millenium (sic). Yet here too, we tend to wait until the last moment; until we're losing share or seeing income decline. That's why TSM has produced a Dossier for marketers on the pitfalls of the marriage guidance approach.**

Use the Dossier to discover the secret of building a brand by using the same seductive techniques which lie behind a happy marriage. Use it to ensure that you are not building walls between the brand and your source of income. Use it to jettison years of reactive "marriage guidance" marketing.

If the Dossier fits with your thinking, do please give me a call or complete the fax-back card in the Dossier, and let TSM counsel your brand to greater profitability.

Promotional letter

We see it as crucial that the regeneration of the Gardens is integrally linked with the tourism strategy for that area. By introducing good, self-sustaining urban design, combined with the forces of developing tourism, positive regeneration is inevitable. The proposals create a more legible place, with a sense of arrival and a sense of "Hereness" which invites exploration and belonging and a rediscovery of its history and identity...

Timpson Manley Architects portfolio

There are now more practising artists in South East London than there were in Italy during the entire Rennaissance (sic). With our project for Lewisham Art House we are helping to ensure this trend continues.

Timpson Manley Architects portfolio

Phoebus Cart approaches the Shakespeare work as initiatory Drama, providing experiences for the soul through the play of desire, thought and action. The theatre company creates human drama experience that explore the marriage of the heart and head, the body and spirit, the psyche and soul, within present day individuals and society.

Special Shakespeare Weekend: Macbeth with Peter Dawkins and Mark Rylance

Peter Dawkins MA (Cantab) Dip Arch, Architect, is Founder-Director of The Francis Bacon Research Trust and a well-known authority on Shakespeare, Bacon and the Wisdom traditions. Besides being the author of many books, Peter lectures and gives workshops in many countries, and leads geomantic pilgrimages and wisdom tours worldwide.

Peter established the Zoence Academy in 1994 which runs seminars and training workshops exploring the Zoence (Science of Life) — a Western equivalent of the Chinese Feng Shui — which includes landscape cosmology, geomancy, sacred architecture, and the relationships between body, soul and spirit.

Special Shakespeare Weekend: Macbeth with Peter Dawkins and Mark Rylance

The Francis Bacon Research Trust researches the ancient wisdom which forms the foundation of the Renaissance and Baconian and Rosicrucian work. The Trust has its own membership scheme and newsletter; organises seminars and conferences exploring the inner meanings of Shakespeare plays; publishes books and articles on the life of Sir Francis Bacon, Shakespeare and the Rosicrucians; and organises Hermetic tours exploring the ancient wisdoms which are a gateway into the Western Wisdom Tradition.

Special Shakespeare Weekend: Macbeth with Peter Dawkins and Mark Rylance

This journey of the individual through the initiatory drama of life on earth, the meeting with the Dark Goddess of the crossroads and the development of the intuition is a theatrical experience in which we can all share.

Special Shakespeare Weekend: Macbeth with Peter Dawkins and Mark Rylance

1995 Pseud Roundup

Pseud of the Year: David Sylvester
Runners Up: James Hall, Iain Sinclair, Martin Amis
Pseud Journal of the Year (an astonishing 28 appearances): *The Guardian*

CONTRIBUTORS: J. Hudson, H. Macpherson, Gnome.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

Drama 1996

THIS is a period when people reflect on what the new year might bring. Square Eyes, though, is able to put viewers of the cable channel L!ve TV — such as they may be — out of at least some of their misery.

A document has been leaked to us which contains the plans for the first soap opera ever screened by L!ve — or V!le, as the broadcaster is jokily known to its inmates. Not since Shakespeare scribbled on a piece of parchment the aide memoire "Denmark. Dead dad. Glum son" has the creative process been so thrillingly exposed.

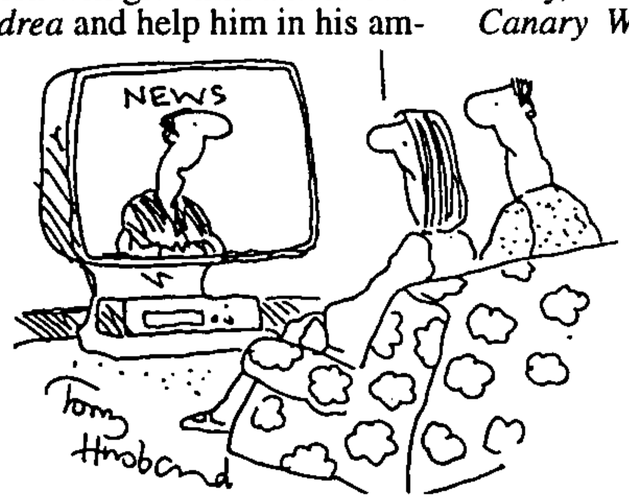
The soap is set in a TV station, V!le's ideas people having perhaps taken too seriously the old writing-school injunction to write about what you know. The list of characters begins with: "Andrea, executive producer, 42, glamorous, ambitious, ruthless..." You don't think this proposal was aimed at Janet Street-Porter, in her days as md of V!le, do you?

"...Still beautiful but has to work at it, looks a bit of a fright getting out of bed in the morning. Has cronies rather than friends, other ambitious media women with whom she networks at Groucho's, Christopher's... shady past... secretly desperate to start a family, looking for a father for her unconceived child..." Ah — you don't think this proposal was aimed at new md Kelvin McKenzie after Janet Street-Porter had left?

Which possibility makes even more intriguing the second lead character of "Mac, head of news... unflappable in any circumstances, holds the whole thing together." Flattery, flattery. "Formerly worked in 'serious' television and desperate to get back to it, considers 'celeb' stuff to be beneath him." Blown it there, I'm afraid.

Who, though, might be "Valentine, 27, male bimbo presenter... drives a Porsche with a personal registration, great ratings winner..." Ah — obviously not anyone at V!le, then. "...is secretly bisexual." Which narrows it down to dozens. And what about "Claudia, drop-dead gorgeous female presenter, 23, blonde... born in Britain but raised in Boston after being given up for adoption." You don't think they could be looking for American coproduction cash? And as for "Jason, 18, blond Aussie, all he wants is to be a sports presenter on TV in Sydney", you don't think they fancied some cash from ABC-Australia as well, do you?

And how might all these fascinating characters, um, interact? The opening episode, a synopsis reveals, begins thus: "*Valentine* has been alerted to the existence of an audio tape which will give him a hold over *Andrea* and help him in his ambition to get *Claudia* the sack..." Later, "*Andrea* traps *Jason* in her office and corners him on the sofa, and he is saved only by a timely call from the owner." The "owner" has not so far been mentioned in the notes for the programme and so we must assume that this is the owner of the *sofa*, calling to ask for it back. A cunning plot twist, this.



"Here's the news for all you morbid bastards out there"

After the commercial break, however, things get even hotter. "*Jake* and *Helen* are under a table hunting the hamster." Square Eyes has had a relatively sheltered life and isn't sure if this means that the office pet has escaped from its cage or if "hunting the hamster" is a narcotic euphemism along the lines of "chasing the dragon". Anyway, afterwards the characters "bemoan their fall from serious journalism. Jake tries it on but gets nowhere". Meanwhile, "*Jason* tells of his resentment that *Andrea* who is as old as his grandmother..." — this is the Janet Street-Porter character — remember "...is coming on to him".

But, wait: there is also subtext. According to a separate sheet of notes "*Andrea* and *Claudia* are mother and daughter, but don't know it yet... a film exists of Claudia's conception which may come back to haunt her one day". Well, these TV people, you know, like to get absolutely everything down on film. Oh, and one last note on Andrea, the JSP character: "*Andrea* is sleeping with *Valentine* but doesn't have the intellectual candlepower to make interesting bar chat." Ooh, bitchy. At the moment this soap-in-progress seems to have no title. Sadly, the best — *Nightmare At Canary Wharf* — has already been used for BBC2's recent documentary on Janet Street-Porter's tenure at V!le TV.

It would be nice at this point to invoke the high quality of terrestrial television's popular drama for 1996. Regrettably the new year launches last week unveiled yet another detective series — an adaptation of Reginald Hill's Dalziel & Pascoe books — and not only a return for BBC1's *Dangerfield*, which features a police surgeon, but a new series with Amanda Burton as a police pathologist. Yet two more series — one about a coroner, one about a pathologist — are reportedly in development at different companies. Drama producers, it seems, are now flogging the detective series literally to death.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

STANDARDS are falling at pisspoor Sky One, which is due to start broadcasting something called *Boiled Egg and Soldiers* in the new year.

Said to be an "in your face" show for kidz at 7am each day, it will be hosted by the usual "streetwise presenters" and include a clever strand called *Windbreakers* in which children have to guess which suspect on screen has farted.

It's not all high culture, however. In *Shoot Your Family* kidz will open wardrobes and laundry baskets to film their domestic dirty laundry with a camcorder. Kidz will also be encouraged to provide the material for yet more dirt cheap TV when they contribute to the strand *Kangaroo Court*: confessions to camcorder about grievances with parents over bedtimes, pocket money, etc.

There will also be an interactive video game called *Cheesy*, and *Meet 'n' Two Veg* — "reviews" of yet more vids, films and music. Yup, Rupert's done it. He's created a TV show that makes *The Big Breakfast* look like an Open University pure maths module...

THE BBC's outside broadcast department threw an elaborate and expensive "open day" at its west London headquarters at the end of November.

The biggest attraction was a £2 million, 40ft-long vehicle packed with electronic equipment and through which visitors were invited to file to admire its dazzling technology. It was freshly painted with colours and logos trumpeting its intended function — covering formula one grand prix motor racing.

Shortly afterwards the BBC's head of engineering who had commissioned the vehicle learned that it was to become redundant stock because ITN had been awarded the contract for covering the formula one world championship.

ITN network director Marcus Plantin was quoted as saying: "When we are offered events of this calibre we have no hesitation in snapping them up very quickly." Actually ITN wasn't "offered" the contract at all: it grabbed it with an offer that simply could not be refused. ITN negotiators slapped £60 million on the table and said: "Take it or leave it. You have two hours". The BBC didn't get a sniff of the deal until it was signed and sealed.

MERIDIAN, the south east's ITV channel, operated a five-day news black-out over the Christmas holiday.

Although there was no local news, a team of hacks was kept on 24-hour call to cover any big stories in the area for the ITN national news.

Likely news sources — the emergency services, for example — were sent a memo by the channel asking them not to disturb the revelling hacks unless the news was really important. And what did they deem really important?

"It should be stressed the incident or disaster must involve multiple death or injury and be of a scale warranting news coverage," the newsmen ominously decreed.

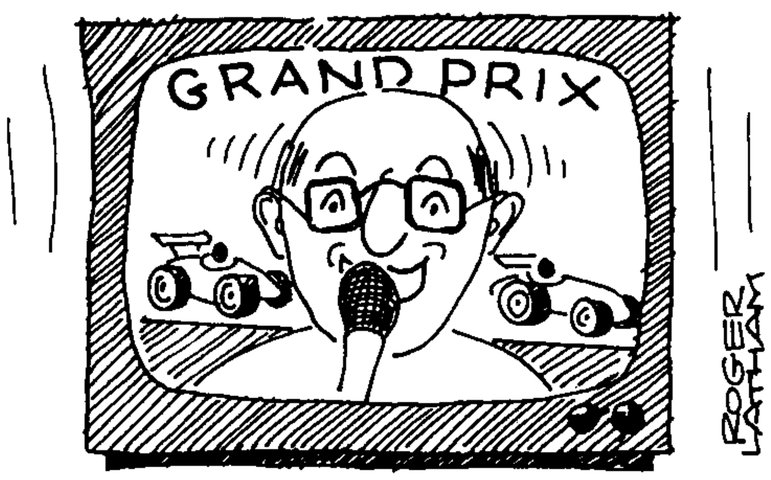
THIS morning
AT THIS TIME OF BEING TOGETHER...
WE LOOK AT COUPLES WHOSE RELATIONSHIP HAS COMPLETELY BROKEN DOWN...
FACING UNEMPLOYMENT...
AND A BLEAK 1996...
SO IT'S GOOD MORNING ANNE & NICK!
Ken Pyne

BBC 1's dynamic *Here and Now* programme attracted plenty of attention in Caversham, near Reading, when it included a feature on mobile phone companies.

These naught companies apparently stick tall masts wherever they like and without being subject to planning restrictions. The programme showed numerous ugly aerials and challenged the company representatives to justify them.

But Caversham folk wondered about a mast identical to those in the programme which had sprung up near them — despite objections. No one had any idea what it was. Eventually the organisation responsible was tracked down: it was none other than the BBC.

A Beeb engineer said the aerial mast was to improve FM reception in Reading. He also said the BBC was hoping to hire it out in the future — to mobile phone companies.



"There! They! Go! And! Yes! This! Is! Sensational! ITV! Is! Taking! Grand! Prix! Into! The! Pits!"

MUSIC NEWS

MORE on Music and Fireworks, the company that held a series of highly successful concerts in Oxford but went bust before it could pay the musicians.

Creditors including the Philharmonia and Wren orchestras will be interested to hear that things had not been going to plan at Music and Fireworks for some time. Employees of the company were shocked to hear its owner, Karen Gadd, talking about ways to avoid returning computers to the charity she also used to run, Music at Oxford. They had to be returned but she was concerned because Music and Fireworks did not have the funds to replace them.

At the same time a VE Day concert the company organised at Blenheim Palace had spectators thoroughly miffed when the firm did not live up to its name — there was music but no fireworks. Ticket sales for the event were also a flop at only 60 per cent. By the end of the night the musicians had sussed the financial disarray of Music and Fireworks and queued for their money, refusing to leave the grounds until they had been paid in full.

If word had got round the insular music world quicker the 100 organisations and individuals owed £400,000 by the latest Oxford concerts might have been wise to Gadd's business expertise. Meanwhile angry creditors can still reach Karen Gadd at the old Music and Fireworks offices from which she now runs a new venture called Oxford Festivals.

Private I-I-I!

1995's Most Self-Obsessed Columnists — based on number of entries in I-I-I in 1995...

1	Michael Winner	14
2	Zoe Heller	13
3=	"Dr" John Diamond	9
3=	Justine Picardie	9
5=	Bernard Levin	7
5=	Harry Enfield	7
5=	Jonathan Woss	7
8	Esther Rantzen	6
9	Oscar Moore	4
10	A.A. Gill	3

HACKWATCH: KEITH WATERHOUSE

"KEITH Waterhouse, CBE, is by common consent Fleet Street's finest writer," the *British Journalism Review* announced recently, below an article in which the veteran hack divulged the secrets of how to be a successful columnist.

Here are his golden rules for column writing, as expounded in the *Review*, accompanied by samples of his *Daily Mail* column.

"Do not expose your spouse to the glare of the public prints — especially not by the whimsical name of Him Indoors or She Who Must Be Obeyed." Waterhouse certainly never refers to his love life — and no wonder after his well-publicised bust-up with his lover not so long ago. But he does have a fondness for whimsical names: the Eccentric Lodger (Thatcher); the Captain (Major); and of course a vast gallery of "amusing" stereotypes such as Sharon and Tracy (shop girls); Ron Sod of the Amalgamated Union of Sootmakers and Allied Trades (old-style union leader); Councillor Hulge of Clogthorpe District Council (old-style local authority leader); and Messrs Bratwurst, Pommefrite and Sardine (European commissioners). Lately he has come up with a new nickname for the Prime Minister: "Him Indoors".

"Every columnist needs a good half-dozen hobbyhorses. But do not ride them to death. Once you have sounded off about, say, Euro-bureaucracy, leave the subject alone for at least six months..." But Waterhouse himself is not above a bit of Euro-whingeing. Here he is in the *Daily Mail* on 7 September 1995: "I see much to mull over in Bernard Connolly's exposure of the 'dangerous confidence trick' of a single currency..." 25 September: "Even as the Captain warns that a single currency may split the European Union, his ministers and advisers are discussing what to call the blasted thing... It is axiomatic that to prefix any word with the adjectival Euro is to place it in the clammy grip of a dead fish. Eurostar, for instance, quite an exciting train as it happens, sounds as if it freights cement." 18 December: "So Messrs Bratwurst, Pommefrite, Sardine and the rest of the Lobster Support Commission have deliberated, and in a mad leap of inspiration equivalent to jumping over a brick, have decided to call the new European monetary 'unit' the Euro... Only Eurostar brings the slightest touch of glamour to the dreaded Euro prefix — and that pales into insignificance at the sound of proper train names."

Another hobby-horse, so over-ridden that it is now fit only for the knacker's yard, is the lottery. In his column on 6 July, he asks: "What is the National Lottery's end goal?" 24 July: "It is, as I've pointed out before, a ridiculous disgrace that the blockheads of the National Lottery's charity arm have been allowed to drag their heels..." 24 August: "I continue to be uneasy about National Lottery scratch cards..." 11 September: "As it becomes more and more evident that many National Lottery-funded landmark projects to celebrate the Millennium will not be finished in time..." 12 October: "The belief that there is a fairy godmother of resources who only has to wave her magic wand is strengthened by the existence of the National Lottery where the magic wand is waved daily." 23 October: "While the National Lottery has incurred the wrath of punters everywhere..." 2 November: "I sometimes wonder what we used to talk about before the National Lottery. The weather, was it? The price of fish? I truly can't remember." 20 November: "Today the Lottery charities board announces grants for organisations to alleviate poverty. But how much poverty will the grants alleviate?"

"The more cuttings you accumulate, the more you will be tempted to offload them on to your readers... Packing the column with other people's quotes is the columnar equivalent of watering the milk. Assimilate the material and then discard it." Take Waterhouse's column of 20 November: "I have been reading Mr [Bill] Gates's vision of the future as serialised in one of the Sabbath newspapers." He then spends the next three paragraphs quoting from it.

"Avoid kneejerk reactions... If the readers can predict what you're going to say, there's little point in saying it — and even less in their reading it." Such as, presumably, his *Mail* column of 18 December: "O come off it, all ye faithful! Why do they have to muck about the traditional tunes of Christmas carols?" Or this, from 11 December: "I have given up trying to keep track of the pros and cons of the mad cow disease..."

"Let the bandwagon roll by. Even if every columnist in the land is commenting on the mother unjustly sent to prison or the teacher who handcuffed a child to a radiator, you don't have to jump aboard unless you have something to say that the others haven't already said." Every columnist in the land agreed that Kenneth Clarke's recent Budget was utterly boring. What, then, does Waterhouse write on 4 December? "The most boring Budget for 20 years... Where, the headlines asked, is the magic? Where indeed?"

"On the other hand, although it's not always necessary to write about the main news event of the day, there are times when the occasion demands it. Given a Hillsborough disaster, for example, there is no point in writing about anything else since nobody will be talking about anything else." Last summer's leadership election in the Conservative Party was an example of a story about which everyone was talking, as was Hugh Grant's arrest in Los Angeles. But what do we find at the start of Waterhouse's column for 3 July? "Guarantee. This column contains no reference to the cast of One Election And A Funeral; to the shifty rabble (or 'world's most sophisticated electorate', as they prefer to be known) who will be voting, or refraining from voting, tomorrow; or to Hugh Grant." Only four days later, however, he fills most of his column with a discussion of the leadership election; a week after that, he writes about Hugh Grant.

And what of that other great talking-point, Princess Di's *Panorama* interview? On 16 November, four days before the broadcast, he announces that he won't be watching it: "I am tired of seeing her picture — every week, enough Di snaps to fill a scrapbook. I am fed up of reading about her caring visits. I have, to sum it up, had it up to here with Di." A week later, he fills his column with a long and deeply unfunny "transcript" of... a spoof Diana interview.

"Notwithstanding Bernard Levin's celebrated intervention with the gas board on behalf of his mother, a column should not be used to pursue a personal grudge against a public utility company, bank, supermarket, commuter line, etc..." Notwithstanding, too, Waterhouse's column of 6 November: "Plumbing is a dying trade. Which surprises me as much as it does you, considering that the last time I had one in to suck his hollow tooth and advise me that my ballcock was on the blink, the bill was £135. Including, of course, call-out fee but not including VAT."

"Your thoughts on mobile phones in railway carriages have already been thought. Likewise your musings on Muzak in pubs." He should know, to judge by his column on 30 October: "Does anyone go to a pub for the Muzak? I should think not. It is piped in by design consultants who think they know what the public wants. But they are wrong."

I-BSkyB

The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Simon J. Betts

DOING THE ROUNDS

A DERMATOLOGIST'S TALE

"MOST of my 26 years in dermatology at Leeds General Infirmary have been happy, by contrast with the last 18 months which have been one of the most miserable and difficult periods of my life."

So says consultant J.A. Cotterill in a resignation statement to *The Lancet*. Dr Cotterill's problems started in April 1992 when his clinics in Harrogate were so busy he had insufficient time to make a diagnosis and record it in the notes. He wrote to his chief executive three times before receiving a reply four months later: "Im not sure how to reply but will consider the matter when I return from annual leave."

Meanwhile patients with malignant melanoma, one of the most rapidly metastasising cancers known, were having to wait two months for an urgent appointment — a point even the trust chairman could not ignore. He arranged a crisis meeting in January 1993 and told Dr Cotterill no more funds were available.

Dr Cotterill then threatened to resign his sessions at **Harrogate**, whereupon the trust appointed another consultant to cover the area, promising a clinical assistant to work with him and freeing Dr Cotterill to concentrate on his duties in Leeds. After the appointment the clinical assistant failed to materialise and Dr Cotterill was told to continue his Harrogate sessions. As a reward for this efficiency saving, the chief executive awarded himself a 27.8 percent pay rise (the largest in the country.)

The final straw for Dr Cotterill came when he was asked to do outreach clinics, thus focusing attention unfairly on the patients of fundholding GPs and seeing far fewer than could be treated in a hospital outpatients' department. Dr Bart Ramsay, a dermatologist at **Whipps Cross hospital**, had already resigned over similar clinics and Dr Cotterill reluctantly followed suit. London has now lost 70 percent of its dermatological inpatient beds; **Sheffield** has no inpatient service at all and skilled dermatological nurses are becoming vanishingly rare. However Dr Cotterill's plea that "doctors must stand together to resist ill-conceived attempts to decimate the profession" appears to have gone unheard. His replacement has already signed up for outreach clinics.

● CHRISTOPHER ADAMS, head of neurosurgery at **Oxford's Radcliffe Infirmary**, has resigned his administrative duties after being told to create "artificial waiting lists". His unit is so efficient it can offer patients early treatment for sciatica, which speeds recovery and return to work. But the "purchasers" can't afford it.

The management solution, to create a waiting list of at least three months, is more than Mr Adams could bear. The Radcliffe has cut the cost of sciatica treatment to £1,194 per client, compared to the national average of £3,124, but this too has caused problems. In late 1994 Mr Adams described his unit as "unsafe and hyperefficient with exhausted and demoralised staff". Still, at least it's cheap...

● THE future of **Barts** continues to keep management consultants in business, with an outfit called CASPE the latest to come up with a solution on behalf of the Kings Fund.

Disney-Barts seems unlikely to go ahead as the hospital is a grade 1 listed building. It also has a state-of-the-art day surgery unit and a recent multi-million pound operating theatre update makes it ideally suited to continue as....a hospital. The Kings Fund has mooted the idea of a charitable status rescue scheme, but chief executive Robert Maxwell was quick to deny any private interest. "I would not be surprised if the private sector was interested," he said.

● TWO years ago the department of health set up the **Hertfordshire health agency** encompassing three health authorities and Hertfordshire FHSA, to rationalise health planning and cut back on management costs by having one team oversee the four bodies. Now health minister Gerald Malone has decided to split it up again: into **West Hertfordshire HA** and **East and North Hertfordshire HA**. This will appease local Tory

MPs, who lost faith in the agency when it tried to close half the county's casualty departments, but has not pleased **North Thames RHA** which claims the agency has been "thrown into disarray". The re-split will undoubtedly prove expensive and create more managerial jobs.

● **WIRRAL hospital trust** has been eager to follow Steven Dorrell's demand that £300 million be cut from NHS bureaucracy by 1997. At a recent staff meeting, trust employees were told that £400,000 had to be saved from admin costs, with the top-heavy salaries of upper management to be specifically targeted. Thus far three 50 year olds with more than 20 years service each in catering, portering and a division of finance have been given their cards...

THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR

CASUALTY departments in Wales were forced to close more than 300 times in the first eight months of last year thanks to the "unprecedented" rise in emergency admissions that happens every year.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

LIKE many who have been damaged by contact with pesticides, Margaret Reichlin is particularly sensitive to crop spraying residues and needs to avoid freshly sprayed areas. With this in mind she had the idea of marking pesticides with a dye so treated areas can be identified and avoided.

Keen to see the idea adopted she informed the Cambridge branch of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory (FWAG) Group, a registered charity ostensibly set up to provide a forum on "practical conservation" in the countryside. In due course a Mr J.E. Terry, "FWAG adviser", wrote back to Miss Reichlin, using the address of the ministry of agriculture (Maffia) office in Cambridge, where the local branch of FWAG happens to reside. His anodyne reply dismissed entirely the idea of using dyes in pesticides and ended with a reassuring homily on the value of pesticides.

Miss Reichlin was more than a little disconcerted — not so much by the letter as by the franking on its envelope. It proclaimed its true origins as "Ciba Agriculture", the largest pesticide manufacturer in the world. On further inquiries it seems Mr Terry is a full-time employee of Ciba who uses the Maffia office to front his FWAG activities.

How nice of the Maffia to lend its offices to a pesticide promotion front. Or given that the Maffia has long been regarded as being in the pocket of the chemical giants, perhaps it's the other way round.

SOME of the difficulty being experienced by the inept Maffia and its farmer friends in containing the adverse publicity on BSE is illustrated by an article in last week's *Sunday Torygraph*. Headed MAD COW RESEARCH ON MICE IS REASSURING, it goes on to describe how the mad cow scare has intensified after the release of research which suggested that BSE could not be transmitted to humans.

If reassuring news is seen as intensifying the scare, the Maffia has little chance when the news is bad. However, the livestock industry has its own way of dealing with bad news — or at least with the bearer of bad tidings.

Geoff Moss, the Cheshire cattle dealer who blew the whistle on BSE cattle being sold into the food chain on Granada TV's *World in Action*, is finding this out the hard way. Not only is he receiving death threats from fellow cattlemen and from slaughterhouse owners, but he has been banned from attending the local market where he normally carries on his business.

His business is a tad unusual. Experienced in detecting early-stage BSE cows, he buys them up from the markets and reports them to the ministry for slaughter. He then benefits from the generous compensation paid to all BSE cattle owners. As this is currently higher than the average purchase price, Moss makes — or used to make — a respectable living.

However, now that Moss can't pick out the cows from the market they will no doubt be going into the slaughter chain. Market owners Wright Manley might like to consider if they are doing the right thing by their customers in banning Moss from the premises.

AGRICULTURE minister Douglas "Piggy" Hogg has been no less sparing of the feelings of his senior civil servants: they have been waiting for the results of a Maffia "senior management review" at which it was rumoured a number of the higher paid jobs were to be axed.

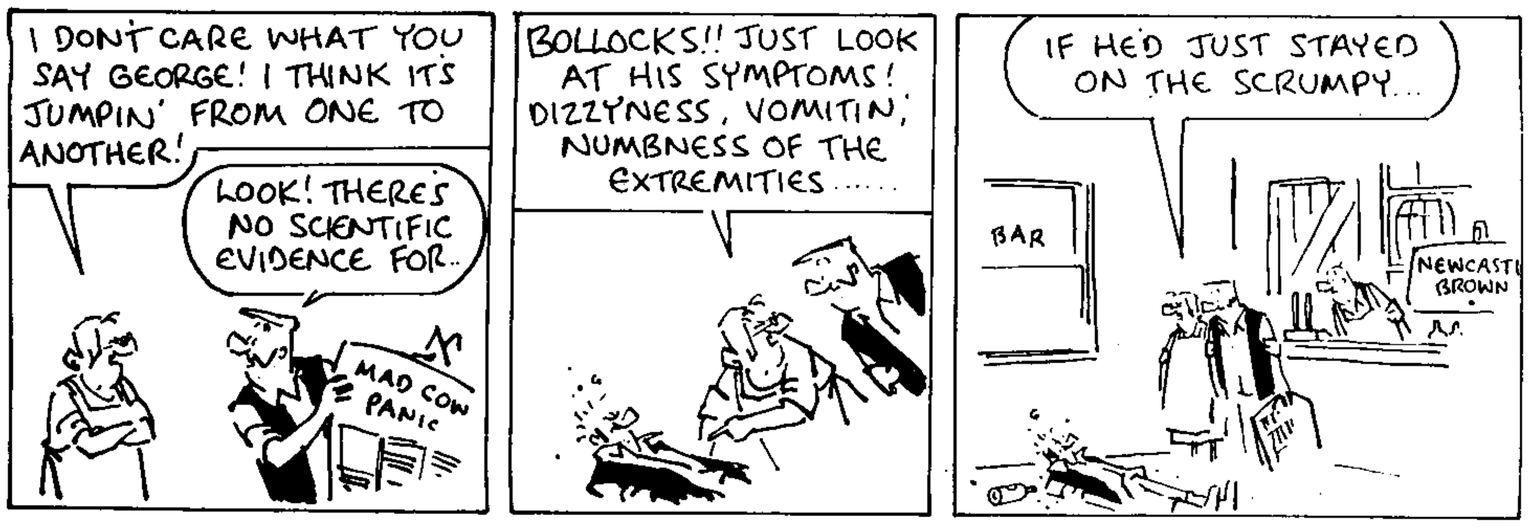
Their worst fears were quickly confirmed when 30 mandarins were summoned to a meeting chaired by Piggy after chancellor Kenneth Clarke's budget. Welcoming them to the meeting, Piggy's opening remarks were: "Sorry there are not enough chairs to go round. This was not an oversight."

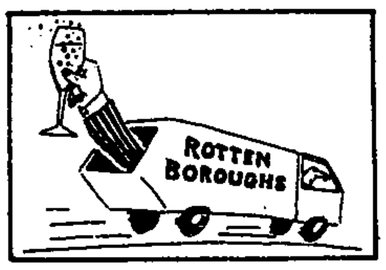
For them and others, even worse news was to come. In all some 58 senior Maffia posts are to go, their current holders earning between £39,000 and £98,000 a year. The public might be forgiven for asking that, if the Maffia can afford to ask nearly 60 mandarins to fall on their swords — at a time when the Maffia workload is at its peak — what on earth were they doing before?

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


I DONT CARE WHAT YOU SAY GEORGE! I THINK ITS JUMPIN' FROM ONE TO ANOTHER!
LOOK! THERES NO SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR..
MAD COW PANIC
BOLLOCKS!! JUST LOOK AT HIS SYMPTOMS! DIZZYNESS, VOMITIN', NUMBNESS OF THE EXTREMITIES.....
IF HE'D JUST STAYED ON THE SCRUMPY...
BAR
NEWCASTL BROWN



Rotten Borough Advertiser

DUST TO DUST, ASHES TO ASHES?

NOW that others have caught up with the *Eye* over Westminster council's decision to house families in two asbestos-ridden tower blocks off the Harrow Road, the *Eye* can reveal that the report into the allegations will be the most devastating yet to emerge about the sleaze-ridden Tory borough.

Its author, former Cambridge chief executive John Barratt, will accuse the council of "negligent behaviour"; of making an "improper and disgraceful" decision; of being "liable for medical claims" from tenants who may contract an asbestos related disease; and of placing "political considerations before people's health".

What makes this worse than the gerrymandering scandals is that the council not only moved homeless residents into a strong Labour ward rather than into one of "eight key marginal wards", but deliberately exposed them to hidden dangers by placing them in Hermes and Chantry Points.

The council is now desperate to stop the report and the town hall PR machine is preparing to sweep its findings under the carpet and denounce them as "unsubstantiated" — even though Barratt has uncovered 1,200 secret new documents over his 18-month inquiry. These reveal some amazing facts. For instance, six *years* before the homeless moved in the council's own environmental health officers warned that the asbestos was "extremely friable" and that there was a "necessity for removal as soon as possible".

In August 1983 the DoE issued a circular on asbestos warning of the health risks, especially for children. In November that year the GLC's medical officer said asbestos dust was getting into people's homes and had to be removed.

Four years later Westminster's then housing chairman, Patricia Kirwan, warned against "decanting the homeless from three of the eight key marginal wards" into the tower blocks because "they are riddled with asbestos". Nevertheless in February 1989 the chairmen's group on the council issued the secret order: "Use all properties outside marginal wards... use the tower blocks." A confidential paper prepared by former deputy leader Simon Milton said using the blocks would also help wreck a bid by local tenants to become landlords of their estate, which included the blocks.

Councillors now claim that air tests conducted before families were moved in showed there was no major health risk. But the council knew the tests had been designed for the workplace only and were useless for residential buildings, as had been made clear in DoE guidelines.

PS: When the council found asbestos in the Strand underpass in January 1989, two weeks before the 100 families were decanted into Hermes and Chantry Points, officers immediately sealed up the tunnel, alerted all emergency services and spent £4 million removing the asbestos.

RED FACE OF THE YEAR

WHEN Glasgow politicos invited council taxpaying locals to "pray at the finest Nativity scene in Britain" — which included life-sized glass fibre sculptures encased in a huge dome and secured with a fragile padlock — the figures were a big hit with thousands of children until one asked: "Where's Jesus?" Er, right before the eyes of worshippers some infidel had stolen the child.

THE TALE OF GLOUCESTER PLACE

IT will be an unsettling new year for Councillor Hettie Peters, Hackney's black Queen of Hearts and erstwhile chair of its social services committee, with its budget of £70 million a year.

Some weeks ago a vicious leaflet circulated before a council meeting alleging that she had claimed housing benefit fraudulently. Westminster council, in whose borough the fraud was said to have taken place, immediately launched an inquiry and passed its papers to police, whose inquiries continue.

Westminster council discovered that benefit had been claimed in relation to premises at 62a Gloucester Place by someone calling themselves "Hettie Peters". The freeholder of the premises is Phil Edmonds, the former England cricketer, who has said in a written statement that during the period benefit was claimed the premises were empty and major renovations were being carried out.

An architect-builder whose offices are in Kingsland Road, Hackney, has confirmed that he carried out renovations in Gloucester Place for Coun Peters and that she was not living in the flat while they were taking place. The architect's invoices and receipts show that Hettie, whom he knows, paid him £23,000 between October 1993 and May 1994 — all in cash.

On each occasion Hettie handed over the money at the architect's offices — except once when £4,000 was handed over by Ms Liz Hymlock on behalf of Hettie at the Hackney Women's Centre. As the total cost was £26,620, the architect-builder stopped work in Gloucester Place. So far police have not been told about Hettie's cash payments to the architect-builder.

(Hackney Women's Centre, incidentally, was at the time receiving a council grant and being run by Hettie. A second audit has been called for to explain unaccounted spending of thousands of pounds. The first audit found mismanagement, not fraud.)

Back in Gloucester Place, meanwhile, the claim for benefit on the premises was made by someone signing themselves "Hettie Peters" and using her national insurance number. It is not clear if the premises were being occupied by virtue of a lease or whether they were being rented out.

The architect-builder who carried out the renovations used to occupy premises in Stoke Newington Church Street. When he left in September 1993, the premises consisted of offices. They are still offices and used by an escort agency. The address of these premises was that given by Hettie Peters to the electoral registration officer to prove that she lived in Hackney when she decided to become a councillor. Under electoral law a candidate for municipal office must reside in the borough before they stand. It would take great determination for a potential councillor to live in such inhospitable premises — but that's Hettie for you.

She is certainly no cheat and knows the difference between right and wrong: she proved it when on the panel which allowed the appeal against dismissal by Hackney fraudbusting director of housing Bernard Crofton, precisely so he could get his job back and carry on with his work catching housing benefit fraudsters in Hackney.

Unfortunately spoilsport officials in the national Labour party have suspended Hettie's membership of the Hackney Labour group and she has resigned as chairman of social services to devote her energies to clearing her name.

PS: Bad times, too, for Meral Ece, deputy leader of Hackney, whose husband Ali owes the council £6,150.98 in rent in respect of 42 Farnell Point on the Nightingale Estate.

The rent accrued before Meral married Ali, but she has been told that in English law unless a spouse publicly repudiates the debts of her husband she is liable for them. What rent-paying tenants are to make of a deputy leader who can't persuade her own husband to pay is unclear.

Ali Ece is under the spotlight for other reasons, too — namely his work for the Hackney Anti-Deportation campaign, which got a council grant. When it was wound up Ali's employers had no money to pay him off, so he demanded that the council give him £10,000 even though it had no authority to do so.

Like a man possessed Ali made scores of phone calls to prominent councillors warning them he had powerful friends in the local Labour party. In the main they resisted, fearing allegations of sleaze if money were paid to the husband of the deputy leader. But a few councillors did stand by Ali, including a Councillor Pearson, a committee chairman, who suggested Ali should be paid off to avoid an industrial tribunal.

This action was wholly unrelated to Pearson's alliance with Ali's wife — an alliance formed with a view to ousting the present council leader. Pearson was made to look stupid when the tribunal had no hesitation in throwing out Ali's claim.

Then there was the memo from Ken Ostler, former head of Hackney's tenancy audit team. This says Ali moved from Farnell Point to 99 Albion Road but did not register for poll tax there. Instead he registered at 489 Kingsland Road. This is odd because that address was his work place. Poll tax arrears of £1,268 have still not been paid by Ali. Meral has always said how much she admired the work of Ken Ostler.

IN BRIEF

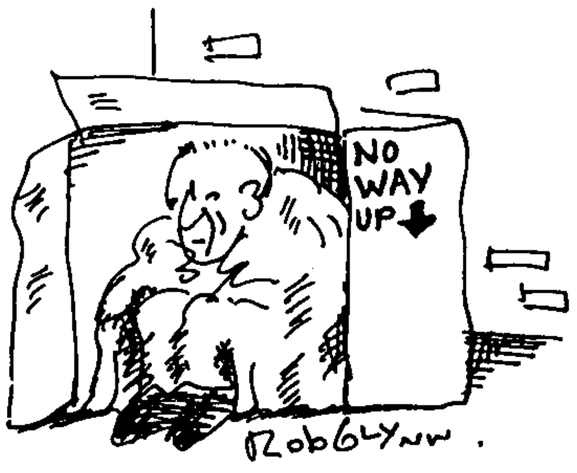
BRIGHTON: Seasons greetings from the coast, where on behalf of the local hospice movement the Macmillan Appeal approached Labour councillor Gill Sweeting, Brighton's former mayor, to win support for its activities. Ms Sweeting's reply? "I find the whole concept of the hospice movement obscene." If someone is that near death, she wrote, "he or she should be put down". When confronted, the former mayor simply berated the hospice for handing her letter to the press. We would like to wish Ms Sweeting A Very Happy Fuck Off And Die...

BIRMINGHAM: All change for Stephen Ward, who has left his job as boss of the council personnel department — which spends £1m a year on recruitment advertising with the local Austin Knight agency — to take up a job with the local, er... Austin Knight agency. The council's advertising services contract is under review, so his first job will be to put in a tender to his old department!

BEDFORD: Mayhem in the chamber: Labour group leader Michael Cotter has resigned "for the moment" pending a police inquiry he is sure will clear him. It follows a fax to his office from a company called AEF, a specialist in winning grants from Europe. In it AEF director Christian Curran wrote: "I would envisage that upon signing a contract with Bedford we would pay you the sum of 2.5 per cent of the contract." The fax then went on to list the info and "help" AEF expected from Cotter "in return for this retainer". What does it mean? No one knows but everyone's blaming *Bedfordshire on Sunday* for breaking the story.

HULL: Following the *Eye*'s piece the district auditor is examining the secret deal that saw Hull lose around £75,000 when it bought chief executive Darryl Stephenson's home in Leicester for £155,000, to help him move to Hull, and sold it for £80,000. It seems senior officers ignored guidelines and that the £155,000 was taken from reserves which could by now have earnt around £40,000 interest. Total losses may be as high as £115,000. Anyone for surcharges?

STRATHCLYDE: The Labour region, which "borrowed" £25 million from its pension fund without consulting its pensioners, ceases to function next April and will transfer its £277 million capital assets *and debts* among the newly created single tier authorities. To sweeten the debt pill the Labour authority will host a "jolly farewell party". Cost: £600,000.



SIGNAL FAILURES

IN AN internal letter leaked to the *Eye*, a senior Railtrack manager confirms that corners must be cut if Britain's profit-driven rail network is to survive until the turn of the century.

Justifying proposals to ease or abandon numerous safety regulations established on the railways over many decades, manager Jan Glasscock writes: "It is no good in five years' time saying 'We were the safest railway in the world but we went out of business'. We do have to be mindful of the commercial effect these [safety] requirements are having on the railway industry as a whole and Railtrack as a business."

This also suggests that Railtrack is again cooking a snook at the Hidden Report into the Clapham Junction crash. It states: "BR shall ensure that the organisational framework exists to prevent commercial considerations of a business-led railway from compromising safety."

THE government's insistence that BR be broken into as many bits as possible is forcing Railtrack into alarming difficulties with work put out to tender and division of responsibilities.

Previous *Eyes* have shown how subcontracting track cleaning and electrical maintenance at stations have bred inefficiency. Railtrack has also hurriedly subcontracted maintenance of the infrastructure on which the safety of the public depends — the rush no doubt fuelled by the need to privatise Railtrack in April in good time to fund pre-election tax cuts. The result of all this sudden change is an astonishing number of faults.

The Railtrack log records that on *one day alone*:

- Contractors misconnected points near Dundee so they could move beneath passing trains — a Glasgow to Aberdeen service would have been derailed had the points been facing towards the train.
- Contractors did not tell signalmen that they were running their rail scooter (a small trolley) on tracks which were open to normal train traffic near Burnley.
- A driver could have been killed after being given the go-ahead to inspect his train in Hertfordshire when an express train was due to pass on the adjacent track. Permission was given by a member of platform staff with a mobile phone, a person who in BR days would have been properly trained but in 1995 did not have a clue.
- On 27 November Britain's busiest station, Clapham Junction, was plunged into chaos in the morning peak because work supposedly completed by Railtrack's contractors was in such a dangerous state BR engineers had to be called in to rectify it.

WORD in engineering circles is that the derailment of a Waterman Railways train near London Euston station — disrupting services for several days before Christmas — may have been caused by the rails spreading beneath the carriages.

This is a plausible theory, as it is precisely what derailed a train in Euston station itself on 31 August. Railtrack noted that the engineers accepted that "road spread was the cause, alleging the poor state of the track was due to the fact *they are not allowed to patrol the platform lines* at Euston" [our italics].

PS: Earlier that day an 80-minute mass technical failure disrupted trains at Euston, terminus of Britain's busiest railway which the government is still refusing to modernise. Fifty seven trains were delayed for a total of 879 minutes, and the cause turned out to be a sticking button in the superannuated signal box.

'Dr B. Ching'

Wrong track

New timetables for Reading to Slough trains say the 8.52am Sunday service will terminate at Outer Mongolia. Great Western Trains said typists had used the words to remind them to check information, but forgot to delete them.

The Times

WATER ROUND-UP

SNOW is falling over Britain, but such minor details need not worry the clever managers of Thames Water, who have launched a campaign against garden sprinklers.

If any customer owns up to using a sprinkler the company is generously offering them a £10 DIY voucher. What the DIY enthusiast might not realise is that he or she will then be charged £40 for a special sprinkler licence to be added automatically to bills.

Over at **Welsh Water**, the IT sector of the company has discovered just how bad for business it is being part of a privatised utility. Custom just seemed to slip away when the computer boffins mentioned the name of their owners — Welsh Water. So to get round the problem they recently relaunched themselves as Lusis — and now the rest of the water company is undergoing a consultation (via an expensive London firm) on the firm's identity and may follow suit.

Public distaste for the government water regulator **Ofwat**, meanwhile, has become clear to Citizens Advice Bureau workers. They say that citizens with faulty bills or poor water supply are always recommended to approach the government watchdog. But the public, in their droves, are refusing to take this advice, declaring that they have little faith in the watchdog. The spurning of CAB advice has become so clear to some volunteers that they have asked the National Campaign for Water Justice, an external campaigning group, to handle the complaints their clients have against water companies.

Proof of Ofwat's inefficacy lies in the relatively low number of complaints handled by its regional branches. For example in the South West the Exeter-based Ofwat committee receives £220,000 public funding a year and with that manages to handle all of one and a half complaints a day.

"It's not me!"

THE WORLD OF ASBESTOS

CHRISTMAS came early for shareholders and bosses of asbestos giant T&N plc. The share price shot up as soon as news came through that the company had beaten off a £117 million lawsuit in the US.

Shares in T&N peaked at 198p earlier in 1995 but plummeted when the company lost a landmark case in Leeds high court and was made to pay £115,000 to victims of its deadly product (*Eye* 885). The share price kept falling as shareholders nervously awaited the verdict of the American case, where Chase Manhattan Bank claimed compensation and argued that T&N's asbestos had contaminated the bank's Wall Street headquarters.

The share price dipped as low as 118p — representing a 40 percent drop in little over a month since the Leeds verdicts. But the US courts ruled in T&N's favour and shares immediately went up to 168p and rising.

To celebrate its good fortune T&N announced that it would be appealing against the Leeds verdicts. Which means that the company's happy new year message to mesothelioma sufferer June Hancock is that she will almost certainly be dead before she discovers whether T&N has finally been brought to book for causing her fatal disease.

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

DAVID LOCK, planning consultant for the department of the environment's rural white paper on the countryside, insisted that his work for the department did not conflict with the work done by his company, David Lock Associates, for large property developers.

It was mere coincidence that his recommendations in the white paper included the development of MoD land, while his firm put forward a planning proposal for a north Oxford consortium wanting to build... on MoD land.

Lock even insists his work is ringfenced from his company's. Strange, then, that at a district council meeting to discuss the north Oxford consortium's development, who should represent the consortium of Wimpey, Taylor Woodrow, and Westbury homes but Mr Lock himself?

He fervently argued for the plans for 7,500 houses. Part of his proposition included a traffic study purporting to give an unbiased view of traffic patterns from a new town at Upper Heyford. This was prepared by Grove projects. What Lock failed to mention during his speech was that Grove projects happen to be a wholly owned subsidiary of Wimpey.

THE British government and the United Kingdom atomic energy authority (UKAEA) both received a bollocking from the European parliament concerning the dumping of toxic and nuclear waste in the English Channel and Irish Sea. And no wonder.

The UKAEA has admitted that this year it has dumped 17,000 tonnes of low level nuclear waste into the English Channel. Meanwhile radiation levels in the Irish Sea are far higher even than those at Mururoa, where the French have been carrying out nuclear tests.

A further 2,000 tonnes of nuclear waste has been dumped in channels off Scotland and in crevices in the bed of the Irish Sea since 1981. Neither the government nor the UKAEA has been forced to do anything about all this...

HUSBAND

Dorothy Maloney come on down!
THE PRICE IS RIGHT
..and who's next. Yes Mark Coldham come on down!
THE PRIC IS RICH
Fuck off!
THE PRICE IS

Letters

Fax finding

Sir,

*Northern Ireland Information Service officials did NOT forget to send out media invitations to a Clinton visit briefing (*BACKBITER, *15 December). The invitation was all set to go — sadly it was faxed up, rather than out, by the "autodial" mechanism on our machine.*

Yours,
ANDY WOOD,
Director, Information Service, Stormont Castle, Belfast.

Hard to swallow

Sir,

*Doing the Rounds (*EYE *884) relates the case of Prof. W. Spitzer and his unpublished research which led to some brands of oral contraceptive being withdrawn from use in the UK.*

Is this the same Prof Spitzer who only a few years ago was claiming that the risk of dying from asthma was related to the amount of drug used by a patient (ignoring the fact that the worse the disease, the greater the risk of death and the greater the treatment required to prevent this happening)? In common with the present findings, the results of the asthma study were publicised before the data were subject to any form of peer review.

Naturally the medical profession has the patients' interests in mind when publicising unconfirmed research findings in the press and is not in any way attempting to obtain greater research funding from pharmaceutical companies, charities or government sources than this work would normally attract.

Perhaps you could enlighten us in future issues?

Yours sincerely,
C.J. WHELAN (DR),
Buntingford, Herts.

Heart and hole

Sir,

DOING THE ROUNDS *on 7 November describes a reference to heart bypasses by keyhole surrey (sic) in North Derbyshire Health's annual review as "crap". Unfortunately MD did not bother to check the facts before writing. I enclose a press release headed "First Minimally Invasive Coronary Bypass Surgery Performed Successfully in France", which is self-explanatory.*

If our perfectly accurate statement is "crap", what word do you suggest to describe MD's journalism?

Yours,
DEBBIE JACKSON,
Community Relations Manager, North Derbyshire Heath.

Modum operandi

Sir,

Modemballs fund — O No! Anna Rak could land you in serious shite: as a computer person, s/he makes a reasonable novelist, albeit in the Princess Di zone, paranoia-wise.

I have no way of knowing if the Microsoft story is true or not, but the "proof" offered is nonsensical:

1. The last thing that one's computer/modem knows or needs to know is its own phone number. It may have the number in text form, but would not have it in a "configuration" set-up which might be readable by a piece of software.

2. The phone number of a caller is known to the BT/ctc switch, and many modern exchanges now provide this information to receivers of calls, if requested. You can buy a display for this service for around £50, and it will work automatically. It won't know if the caller is a modem, a human voice or an automatic modem. This is one way the information could have got into a database, for subsequent use as described.

Get a real computer expert to explain all this (not me, I know nothing but I know bullshit when I see it). Don't make Gates's lawyers any richer.

Yours faithfully,
LIONEL SHAPIRO,
Orchard Grove, Bucks.

Lookalike

Wilmore

Street-Porter

Sir,

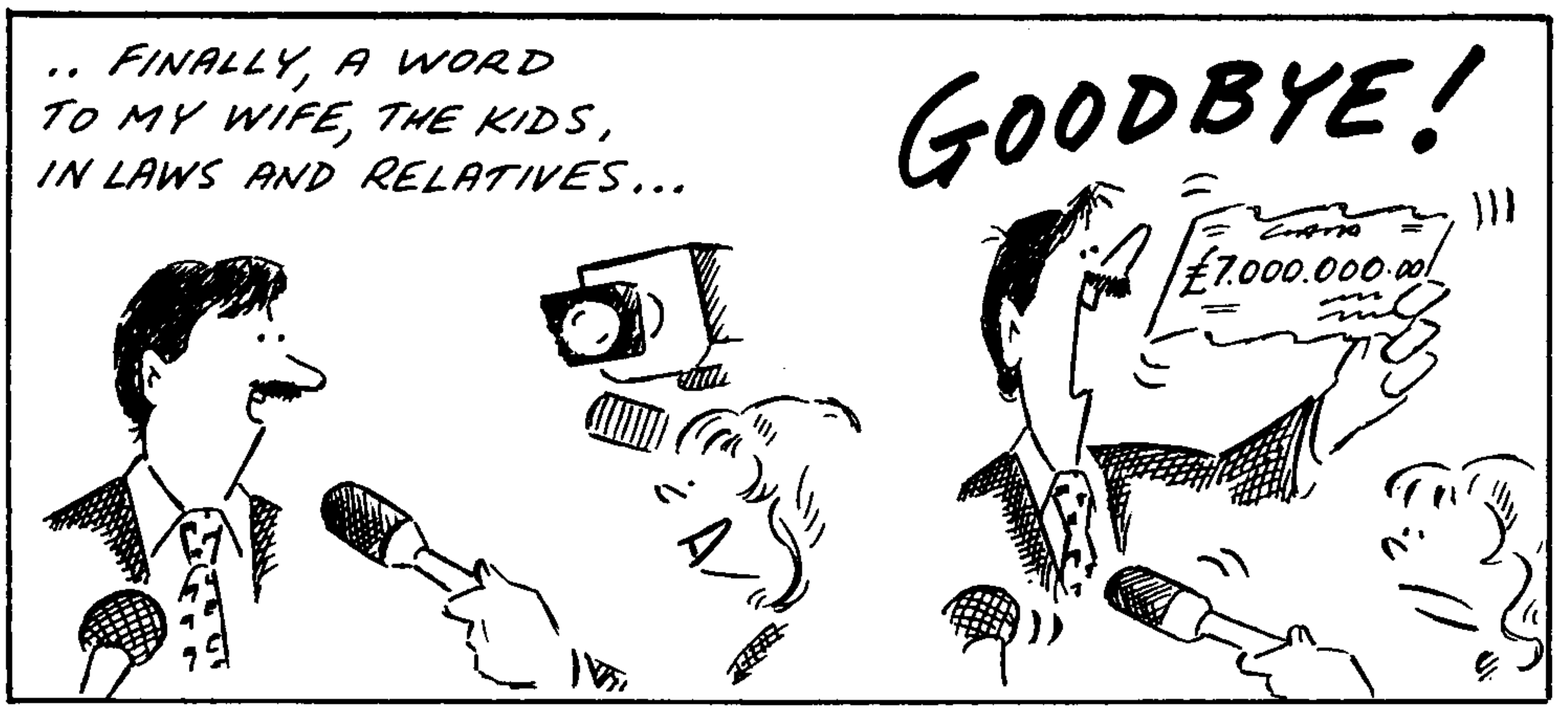
Have readers noticed the remarkable resemblance between Vicky Wilmore, 10, who, after a bump on her head, reversed her upside down-back to front writing problem, and Janet Street-Porter?

Is it too much to hope that a swift blow to the head will cure Street-Porter of her back-to-front diction, deranged syntax and upside down thinking?

Your sincerely,
GEOFFREY JONES,
London SW3.

The Lottery Winners

TURNER



The Wright word

Sir,

Regarding your article about W.S. Atkins in the NEWS *section of* EYE *887; do you have no Welsh persons in your office?*

You wrote of "Ysbyty Hospital, Bangor". As any fule kno, "Ysbyty" is the commonly-used Welsh term for hospital.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE WRIGHT,
Loughborough.

Contributing factors

Sir,

Re: Pension scheme holidays. I was annoyed to read in FOOTNOTES (EYE *887) your criticism of NFC (the former National Freight Consortium, not Council as incorrectly stated) for taking a "holiday" from contributing to its pension scheme.*

Your columnist is ignoring the obvious fact that when employees sign up for an employer's final salary based pension scheme, they are agreeing to pay a certain percentage of their salary whilst they are employed to guarantee a pension which is a fixed proportion of their final salary (usually subject to some form of indexation). The employer agrees to make the necessary funding payments, under actuarial advice, to the scheme to provide this pension.

The reason pension schemes such as NFC's are in surplus is that the actuarial predictions of investment returns were set prudently low and actual investment returns proved to be better than predicted. The surplus represents the amounts overpaid by the employers in the past based on this, in hindsight over-prudent, actuarial advice.

When the opposite situation arises, and pension schemes fall into deficit, there is rightly no call that the pensioners should foot the bill; it is the employer's responsibility to top up the fund.

Although some employers have chosen, on an ex-gratia basis, to use pension scheme surpluses to increase the pension payments to their former employees, there is no general requirement or moral obligation for them to do so; the employers are fulfilling the contract they made when their employees entered the pension schemes and making the payments to which pensioners are entitled.

Any pensioner who feels his pension is too small should not blame his employer, but consider why he did not make additional contributions whilst he was working.

Yours faithfully,
MARK DOWLING,
Bristol.

Sitting pretty

Sir,

Re: FUNNY OLD WORLD, EYE *886. Unless you have documentary evidence of a huge coincidence, I would suggest that your correspondent "Anon" or the Japanese hire company have been listening to old Gerald Hoffnung records of the late 50s or early 60s. A remarkably similar set of instructions is on the same disc as "The brick labourer's sicknote".*

Incidentally, Cyclops must be losing his touch — I have been able to complete the last two crosswords whilst sitting on the john.

Tootle lie, Tootle loo (geddit?)

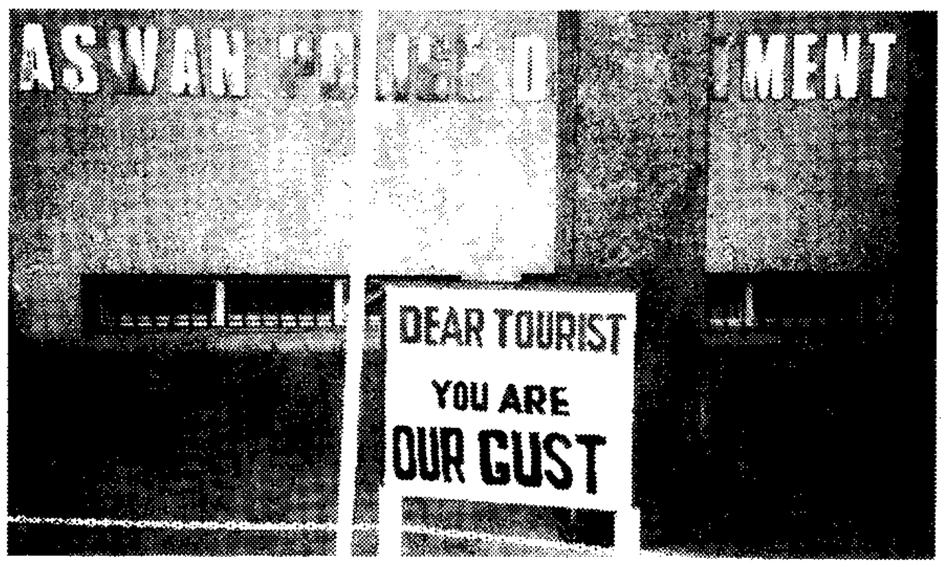
Yours sincerely,
ROGER J. HARRIS,
(sitting in the sun by the sea)
Tortola, British Virgin Islands.

I-SPY

Seoul, S. Korea

HAMILTION SHIRT SHOP WILL GOUGE FOREIGN CUSTOMERS WASHINGTON SHIRT SHOP WILL SELL SHIRTS AT THEIR ADVERTIZED PRICES.

Aswan, Egypt



Submitted by Michael Shaw and Dr Paul Coones. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Info detectives

Sir,

Anna Rak may be concerned about invasion of privacy, as I am, particularly if it includes misuse of an on-line system.

However, writing clearly about a technical subject is as important as writing clearly about architecture, journalism, politics and all the other aspects of life your illustrious organ covers.

However, it is not clear to me how or why software on a CD-ROM would request personal details, then interrogate the computer for alternative information — presumably from registration of a previous product either on the same CD-ROM or from other software. As far as I am aware no software is able to ascertain the phone number of a phone line a modem is plugged into — unless you know different.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW IRCHA,
Kingston, Surrey.

It could be true

Sir,

Thanks for the free publicity; much appreciated.

It's a lottery understanding the millennium bids. We bid for £50 million of funding with £75 million of privately raised capital (where is the matching funding for the new Tate and the Lowry museums?)

Our bid was hardly original. We wanted to become the centre of the European information highway; we wanted to connect all secondary schools up to a series of servers and satellites so that every classroom could dial down film, television programmes and video, photos, text books and the like; this would have been a major saving to HMG and not an inconsiderable innovation, and finally we wanted to create the first 'digital library for the UK on a par to the British Library (though we've still some way to go to top its debts) for television, radio and music. Since Ally Pally witnessed the birth of world television in 1936, we felt we'd hit upon a way of celebrating that past and its near future. Six hundred jobs for the tenth poorest borough in the UK was what was at stake.

Of course, since we're a charity we needed the expertise of a pr company to help us through the maze and, after a tender, Shandwick's won. They won because their proposals were the best and thankfully the cheapest. Risking £100k for a potential £125 million is not unreasonable.

As to our Paris visit, four people went; two officers, one trust member and one member of the Ally Pally staff. Thirty years ago we had a race track in the park and we had a serious offer from the French Trotting Association to build a new course. With Eurostar arriving at King's Cross (12 minutes from Ally Park by train) before the end of the century, the French had espied an alternative way of creating a new sport. A sort of horses for courses if you like. Risking £1,500 for a potential reward investment of £10-£15 million is not unreasonable.

Yours sincerely,
DEREK WYATT,
Chair — Alexandra Palace & Park Trustees.

70% roof

Sir,

Far from being a last ditch PR stunt, Virgin Direct's — PEPs not planes — raid on Nat West's Christmas bash was totally pre-planned (XMAS HYPE, *15 Dec).*

Given the choice between a stilted City session full of bankers and a party at the Roof Gardens, most hacks unsurprisingly opted for the latter. We were merely making life easier for those intrepid scribes who embarked on both.

Rather than sending over Virgin air hostesses with vodka we relied on the substantial charms of Roof Garden beauties armed with champagne!

Pip, pip,
WILL HOLT,
Virgin Direct PR.

Leak plug

Sir,

Too much brandy in the Christmas pud, boys?

I was not annoyed, as reported in your last issue, about the leaking of THE PEOPLE*'s David Mellor-Antonia de Sancha exclusive to the* SUNDAY TIMES. *Why would I be when I had given the* TIMES *a head start on the story in exchange for proper credit for my newspaper?*

Once THE PEOPLE *was printed early on the Saturday evening, the swapping of editions by the various Sunday titles' circulation departments would mean the story was fair game for everyone (so the idea that Andrew Neill should keep it "locked in his desk drawer until midnight" is a potty piece of embellishment by some dumb sod who knows nothing about newspapers).*

No, I was livid that the NEWS OF THE WORLD *apparently had a proof of* THE PEOPLE*'s front page before the paper rolled off the presses, which is why the (unsuccessful) leak inquiry was instigated.*

Or could you possibly be inferring that Andrew Neill leaked the story to the NEWS OF THE WORLD*? I hope this is not the case, or Mr Neill might be forced to consult Sue — not* THE PEOPLE *news desk secretary of that name, who has been sacked for selling stories to the opposition, but the better-known consort of Messrs Grabbit and Runne.*

Sincerely,
BILL HAGERTY,
London W4.

Fairy de-lights

Sir,

ROTTEN BOROUGH ADVERTISER *tries to paint Birmingham as something of a pioneer in the municipal "sex for sale" industry. Not so. We in Manchester blazed a trail years ago in our council-sponsored promotion of gay and lesbian sex in the city centre. A stroll down picturesque, fairy lit Canal Street, tarted up with council money, and known affectionately as "-anal -treet", shows that on the rent boy scene, anything that Amsterdam can do we can do better. Prostitution in any form you want is available in every alley of the gay Picadilly Village area.*

Yours,
D. BOWMAN,
Manchester.

Kolbe

Sir,

With reference to G.E. Lucas' letter (EYE *887), is the virulently antisemitic priest Fr Maximilian Kolbe by any chance related to the priest of the same name who on July 30 1941, whilst on roster parade in Auschwitz, volunteered to SS Kommandant Fritsch to give his life for a fellow inmate, a Sergeant Francis Gajowniczek, and was subsequently bricked up in Death Block 11 and died in agony 18 days later?*

I think we should be told.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN H. HIGGS,
Guildford, Surrey.

Colliterally Dalls

£10 paid for contributions

"Sid [Field] used to come on stage and literally open his heart out to the audience."
DAVID SUCHET, Radio 4
(Simon Grover)

"This is the sort of pitch which literally castrates a bowler."
TREVOR BAILEY, Radio Four
(Chris Kenny)

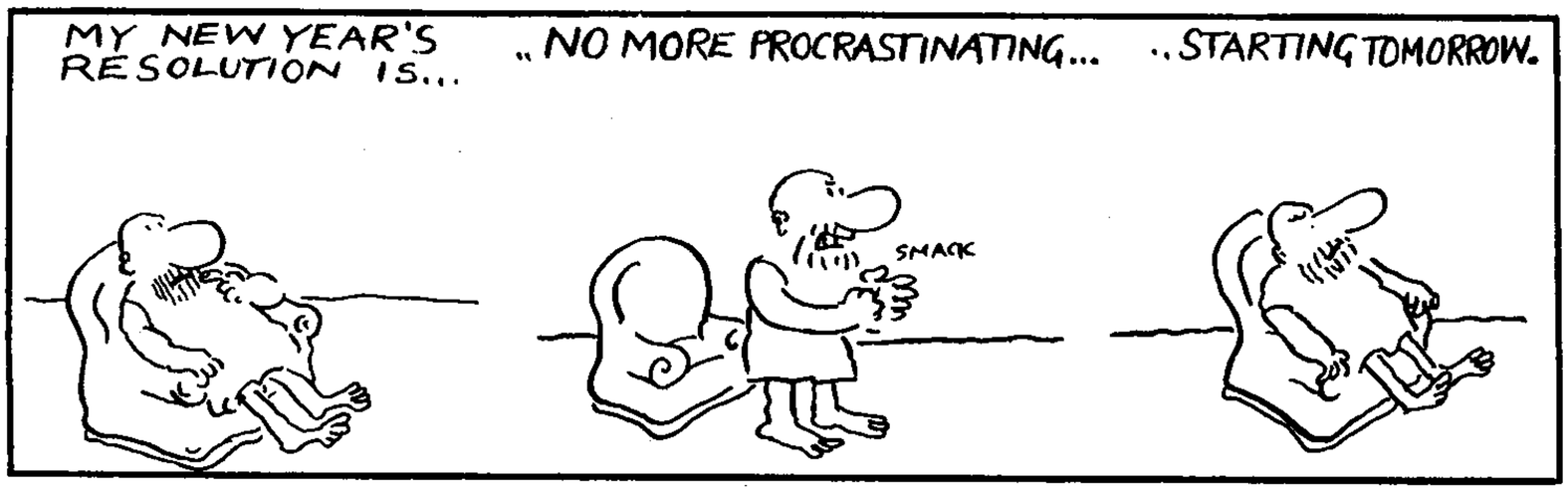
"Sammy Cahn literally put the words into Frank Sinatra's mouth."
ITN
(Jonathan Harrison)

"The Embassy final has literally turned into a Greek Tragedy for Alan Warriner."
SID WADDELL, BBC
(Jonathan Harrison)

"We're talking to Frank Bruno this morning and the phones have literally been melting."
'Motormouth' Presenter, ITV
(Paul Cardin)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY

Victor Lewis-Smith

● "Employment — Your Week Ahead. *Friday*: If your interviewer is male, it may be easier for you to achieve success. Why not bring along your girlfriend? The ox should avoid the goat and horse. *Saturday*: Excellent! The positive forces of a lucky day are here. Be sure to wear yellow trousers and black jewellery. Yellow underwear too! No squid for lunch though. If you attend an interview given by a dog, you shall receive good news. Tigers should avoid the monkey and snake. *Monday*: If you don't mind, dress up in a yellow suit, shirt, and tie and even stockings, gentlemen! Dragons should avoid the dog and the rabbit. *Tuesday*: Attend your interview with a monkey and success will simply fall into your hands. Snakes should avoid the pig and the tiger. *Wednesday*: Want to succeed? Then bring all the female members of your family to your interview. Success will be guaranteed! Horses should avoid the rat and the ox." *(Eastern Super Job [Hong Kong], 13 October 1995. Spotter — Dr George Adams)*

—●—

● **"This situation has got completely out of control," Mike and Barbara Holder told astonished reporters at their home near Cinderford in the Forest of Dean. "The curry poisoner is trying to kill us, yet the police do nothing. We need help."**

The Holders were speaking after being discharged from Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, where they had both complained of severe sickness after eating home-made turkey curry. "It all began last October, when the poisoner began preying on our animals. Several cats were killed, a goose was poisoned, one of our goats became violently ill, and two pet cockatiels died in mysterious circumstances which have never been satisfactorily explained. That was when we decided to install the security cameras."

Mr Holder then explained what had happened earlier that evening. "Obviously, the poisoner must have broken into our kitchen and put drugs into our curry. I began hallucinating soon after dinner, and was convinced that my wife was turning into a roll of Sellotape and that my nose and eyebrows were growing longer and my teeth were igniting. I felt I was disappearing, floating up. But I am certain that we now have the curry poisoner on film. The video shows him coming to the gate, at which point we lose sight of him. Three minutes elapse. He must have got in through a window and put something in the fridge where the curry was. Somebody is trying to kill us. It's the only explanation."

A police spokesman said later: "The couple have presented evidence to us, but we do not intend taking any further action". *(Western Daily Express, 20 October 1995. Spotter — Simon Dean.)*

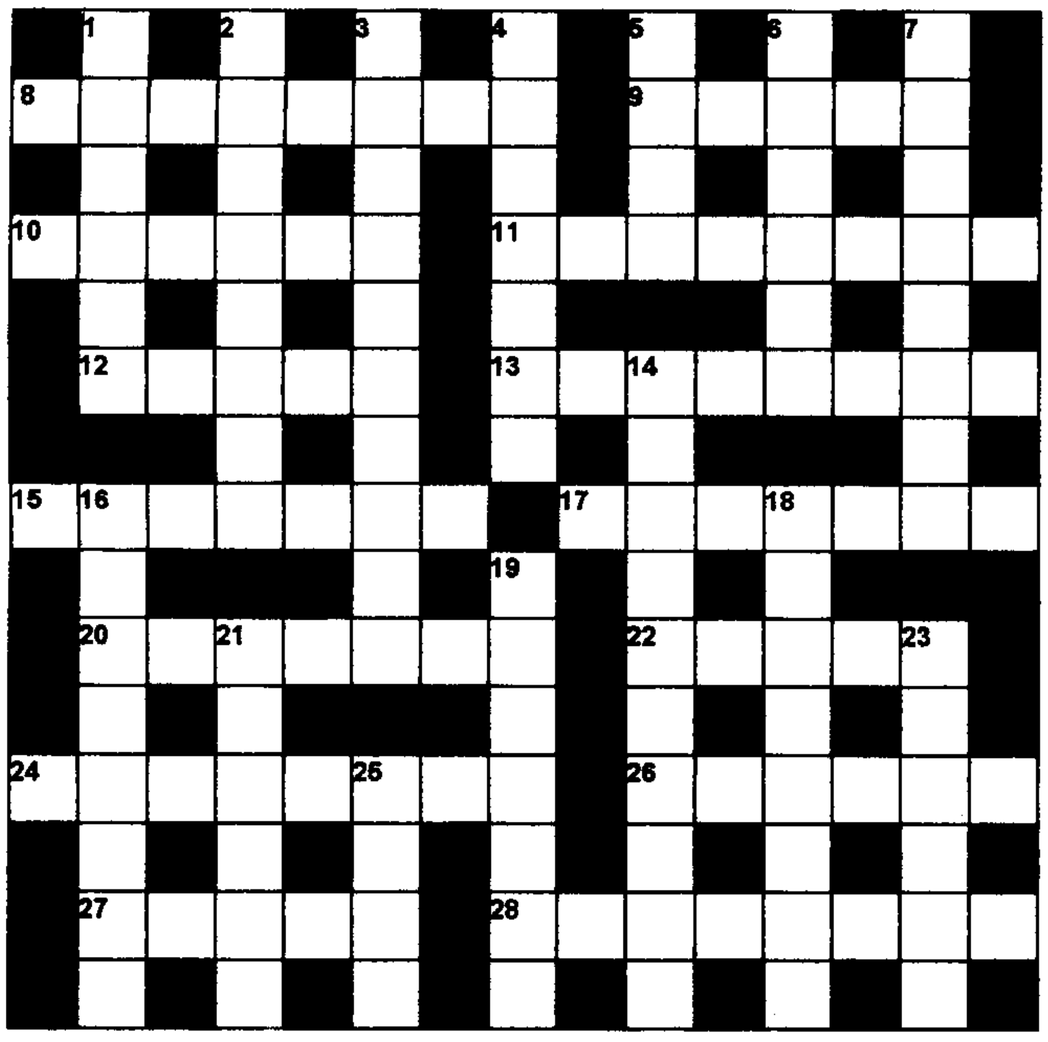
—●—

● *"In retrospect, I admit it was unwise to try to gain access to my house via the cat flap," Gunther Burpus admitted to reporters in Bremen, Germany. "I suppose that the reason they're called cat flaps, rather than human flaps, is because they're too small for people, and perhaps I should have realised that."*

Burpus, a forty-one-year-old gardener from Bremen, was relating how he had become trapped in his own front door for two days, after losing his house keys. "I got my head and shoulders through the flap, but became trapped fast around the waist. At first, it all seemed rather amusing. I sang songs and told myself jokes. But then I wanted to go to the lavatory. I began shouting for help, but my head was in the hallway so my screams were muffled. After a few hours, a group of students approached me but, instead of helping, they removed my trousers and pants, painted my buttocks bright blue, and stuck a daffodil between my cheeks. Then they placed a sign next to me which said 'Germany resurgent, an essay in street art. Please give generously' and left me there. People were passing by and, when I asked for help, they just said 'very good! very clever!' and threw coins into my trousers. No one tried to free me. In fact, I only got free after two days because a dog started licking my private parts and an old woman complained to the police. They came and cut me out, but arrested me as soon as I was freed. Luckily, they've now dropped the charges, and I collected over DM3,000 in my underpants, so the time wasn't entirely wasted." (Vancouver Sun, n.d. Spotter — Elizabeth Rushton)

EYE CROSSWORD 44 by Cyclops

£100 Winner JEREMY DOYLE



ACROSS

8 Norma's upset by Conservative gutless hierarchy, as a rule (8)
9 A couple of tits see the point in Big Bang (5)
10/11 Pub crowded — so a stable environment for delivery had to be found (2,4,2,3,3)
11 (see 10)
12 One has to act badly with nothing on back in the USA (5)
13 Not wishing to be seen to be like Salman Rushdie? (2,6)
15 Is able to be twisted inside bloke as a means of stopping hands wandering! (7)
17 Made a balls-up of gobbling Labour's leader — gagged (7)
20 Tory Gale's pissed — clot! (7)
22 The mess surrounding would-be ambassador, a familiar odd-ball dame! (5)
24 Piss taken by medical staff? (8)
26 One-time women-only second city (6)
27/14 Christmases at Windsor, perhaps, do make dire weekend viewing (5,5,5)
28 Tantrum results from having revealed you're gay with rupture (8)

DOWN

1 House repeatedly cut short Santa's little outburst (2,2,2)
2 Not the royal family's favourite programme of late, that's the broad view (8)
3/18 Carol's orgasmic invitation to a political party rally? (1,4,3,2,8)
4 Go-getting Di — many upsets with Charles at first (7)
5 To be right next to an arse, we hear (4)
6 Get high, like, on Conservative downfall (6)
7 A big knob is highly regarded by Catholics (8)
14 (see 27)
16 Crown in the grip of one single mobster (2,6)
18 (see 3)
19 Devious little Colonel North taking in stupid nit of a president (7)
21 Arrested Leeson and Ian Hislop (6)
23 Straight up the nose, maybe, but not Ecstasy (6)
25 Smart move dumping a mate of Denis's (3,1)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 05.01.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 43

ACROSS: 8 Fab Four 9 Eye Let 10 Masses 11 Unionist 12/14 Politically Incorrect 15 Zionist 16 Wimpish 19 Labour Party 23 Garrison 24 Recess 25 Runcie 26 Ecstasy.

DOWN: 1 Ofwat 2 Obese 3 Tosspots 4 Groupie 5 Gemini 6 Mein Kampf 7 Newsflash 13 Nicaragua 14 (See 12) 17 Interest 18 Launder 20 Risley 21 Scrap 22 Bskyb.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

I am not inconsiderably very annoyed by my friend Sir David Lightbulb, who has let me down very badly by dying. This is really very inconsiderate of him, as it means that my majority has been reduced to three, if we lose the by-election. Which of course we won't. But we might, because he only had a majority of 16,000, which is not enough these days. Dr Mawhinney even suggested that we should get ready for a general election. What rubbish, I told Dr Mawhinney. "Of course we don't want a general election yet, because I still have so much of my programme to complete." Dr Mawhinney in his rather rude way asked me what I had in mind. "Er," I said, "well, there is my plan to give chartermarks to nursery schools... er... free vouchers for cone-lines... er... alright, let's have a general election. I'll just go and ask Mr Heseltine which days he is free."

Tuesday

Today I flew to Madrid with Mr Clarke for another very important Euro-summit. Unfortunately, it took several hours to find our hotel which was on the outskirts of the city next to a new fish processing plant which was called "Los Pesces Di Cornwallo". The hotel only had one room plus shower which Mr Clarke and I had to share. When we got there, our landlady Mrs Portillo gave us a large, gold-edged invitation from Mr Herr Kohl and Mr President Chirac, to visit them at their hotel which was called The El Magnifico. They are very obviously very lucky to have been given very nice rooms in the same building as the conference. When we got there on the tram, the drawing room of Mr Kohl's penthouse suite was even larger than Mr Heseltine's office. Mr Kohl had put towels on all the chairs, so we had to stand up while he told us what we were all going to agree to the next day. "Remember, mein kleine freund" he said, "ein volk, ein Reich, ein currency." I had to speak to him very sternly in my special standing-up-to-Europe voice. "Although I have neither ruled out nor ruled in any British participation in the single currency," I said, "I have however prepared some possible names in this special book from Ryman's." I then read out my suggestions which were:

- the shilling
- the half-crown
- the ten-shilling note

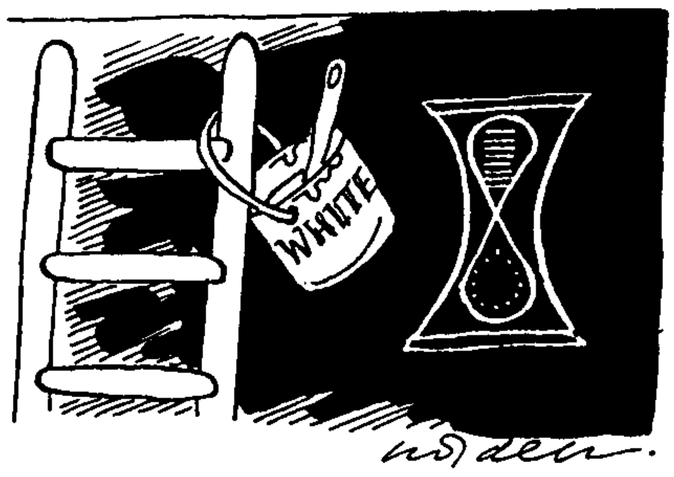
and my favourite, which I left till last,

- the Major.

Mr Kohl took my list and after considering it very carefully he threw my book in the bin.

"It has already been decided," he said. "It will be called the Euro." "Oh," I said, "that is a very interesting idea, but thanks to my Maastricht opt-out I am reserving my position with regard to this one." "Get out," he said, in his friendly way, "Jacques Chirac and I have got work to do." Mr Clarke and I missed the last tram back, and it was 3 o'clock in the morning by the time we got back to our hotel.

EUREAU de CH



Wednesday

Today was a very historic day, when it was finally decided what the new name of the European currency is going to be. The voting was as follows: for the name Euro, 14 countries. Other suggestions (eg, florin, emu, pound, etc), 1 vote, ie me. Mr Clarke whispered, "It's just like the Eurovision Song Contest without Terry". "What has my brother got to do with it?" I said to him crossly. "I would be obliged if you would not try to distract me by talking about television personalities who are of no historical importance at all, unlike their brothers who are about to make a very important speech." I then told all the other delegates that in my judgement the European currency was a completely mad idea, which would not work and would lead to the end of civilisation. Everyone was very shocked by how outspoken I was, and after a long silence Mr Herr Kohl shouted down from the top of the table "So, you are against it then?" "On the contrary," I replied. "I have not yet made up my mind." That certainly shut them up, and they all immediately began to laugh.

Thursday

I was very in no small measure excited to be rung up by Mr Moore, the Editor of the Daily Telegraph, who said that he was so impressed by my attack on the single currency at Madrid that he wanted me to write an article about it for his newspaper. "When is the deadline?" I said. "Don't worry about that," he said, "we got Dr Mawhinney to write it, and we're running it tomorrow under the headline 'Why I Say EMU Stinks by Prime Minister John Major'."

Friday

I am even more not inconsiderably annoyed by my ex-friend Mr Ashby-De-La-Louche who has let me down even more badly than Sir David Lightbulb.

Mr Ashby has not even had the decency to die unexpectedly but has been made bankrupt by bringing a silly libel action about whether or not he sleeps with other men.

Dr Mawhinney tells me that this is terrible news since it will cut our majority down to two, since bankrupts cannot remain Members of Parliament.

"This is a very sleazy and unpleasant business which reflects badly on the party," I said.

"Yes," said Dr Mawhinney. "Why don't we bung Ashby a load of money to save his seat and keep our majority?"

"Good idea," I agreed.

Christmas Day

We had a very nice day at Chequers and I was given some very nice Christmas presents including:

- Some chocolate Euros from Mr Herr Kohl wrapped up in gold paper with his face on them.
- A Ryman's Whistling Key-Ring from Mr Ryman himself with a card that said "To one of our most valued customers".
- A gold watch from Mr Heseltine engraved to "J.M. from P.M., wishing you well in your retirement".

This year I did not get a present from my brother Terry due to an unfortunate mistake which occurred with the security men in Downing Street. They told me there was a suspicious package from someone calling himself "Terry".

I told them not to take any chances, as "Terry" could easily be short for "terrorist". They then blew it up in a controlled explosion.

However, all that was discovered in the package were two pairs of grey socks from Sockworld of Croydon (formerly J.R. Ballard, Gentlemen's Hosiery) and a printed card saying "Happy Holiday, from your brother, TV's Terry Major Ball".

THE UNCUT QUEEN'S SPEECH

H.M. Queen:

I would like to concentrate this year on the unsung heroes who modestly go about their work helping others and not making a great fuss about it **[and not ringing up the News of the World and getting their picture taken late at night in hospitals]**. I think, for example, the charitable endeavours of the humble Irish Nun **[tell the BBC to go and find one]** are typical of someone who for years has been quietly helping the poor and needy **[without making a song and dance about it and going on Panorama and telling everybody that she's some kind of a saint]**.

It is people such as Sister O' **[fill in name]** who deserve our respect and our thanks **[not some psycho in a designer dress who grabs all the headlines and pretends that she's Mother bloody Teresa]**.

With this in mind may I therefore wish all of you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year **[except for you. Yes, you know who you are and when those divorce papers come through the post you'd better sign them pronto or you'll be penniless and never see the kiddies again. Get the picture? You've picked the wrong Queen to mess with this time.]**

God bless you all.

I've suggested a few cuts Ma'am, and retyped them in bold – just in case we're short on time, of course. J.B.

LATE NEWS

WHITE HELL GRIPS NATION

by Our Media Staff
Jane Thynne Time of Year

BRITAIN'S newspapers were yesterday faced with huge areas of white space. "It is typical," said one Editor. "At the first sign of Christmas everyone goes on holiday and all our pages are blanked out."

One man who did struggle in to work was Paul Johnson, and he managed to fill 40 pages in the course of one day including "Why they should divorce", "Why they shouldn't divorce" and "Why can't the media leave them alone?".

Other areas of the press were, however, not so lucky and some were left snowed under by six page drifts of Peter McKay and Geoffrey Wheatcroft.

Met men are warning the public not to go out and buy a newspaper unless they really have to.

1996 — A Guide to Forthcoming Anniversaries in the New Year

January 17th: Alfonso Crapp, surrealist painter, born Bruges 1896. Famous for eating his bicycle.

February 3rd: Giovanni Espresso, engineer, born Padua 1946. Best known for inventing the Trouser Press.

March 17th: Jean Baptiste Jaspan, French composer, born Limoges 1796. Best known for his tragic opera "Morte del Observatore".

April 9th: Battle of Vindaloo. In 1656 in Madras General Nabob Moustache routed the rebellious Balti-wallahs led by the legendary Tandoori the Terrible.

May 14th: 1496, first fly-in-soup joke, published in Punch Magazine by cartoonist Brother Cadmus (Cad).

(More space-filling rubbish on other pages, Ed.)

BOREMAN 'ALIVE AND WELL IN ENGLAND'

by Our Publishing Staff
Giles Gordonsandtonic

A SENSATIONAL new theory has been advanced by top writer David Codsyallop (author of *I Shot the Pope, Hitler Was a Woman, The Holy Grail is Made Out of Tupperware*), claiming that the man long believed dead is actually alive and well and living at an address in Westminster.

Boreman, the least wanted man in the world, was once the right-hand man of dictator Mrs Adolph Thatcher but he claimed afterwards that he knew nothing about what was going on.

He now lives in obscurity in a cul-de-sac called Downing Street under the assumed name of John Major.

Boreman *(cont. p.94)*

CORNER POETRY

In Memoriam Dean Martin (Dino Paul Crocetti)

So. Farewell
Then.
Dean Martin.
Crooner and
"Lover of
Life".

You began your
Career with
A Double-Act.

And ended
With a
Double.

Yes, you were
The last of
The so-called
Rat Pack.

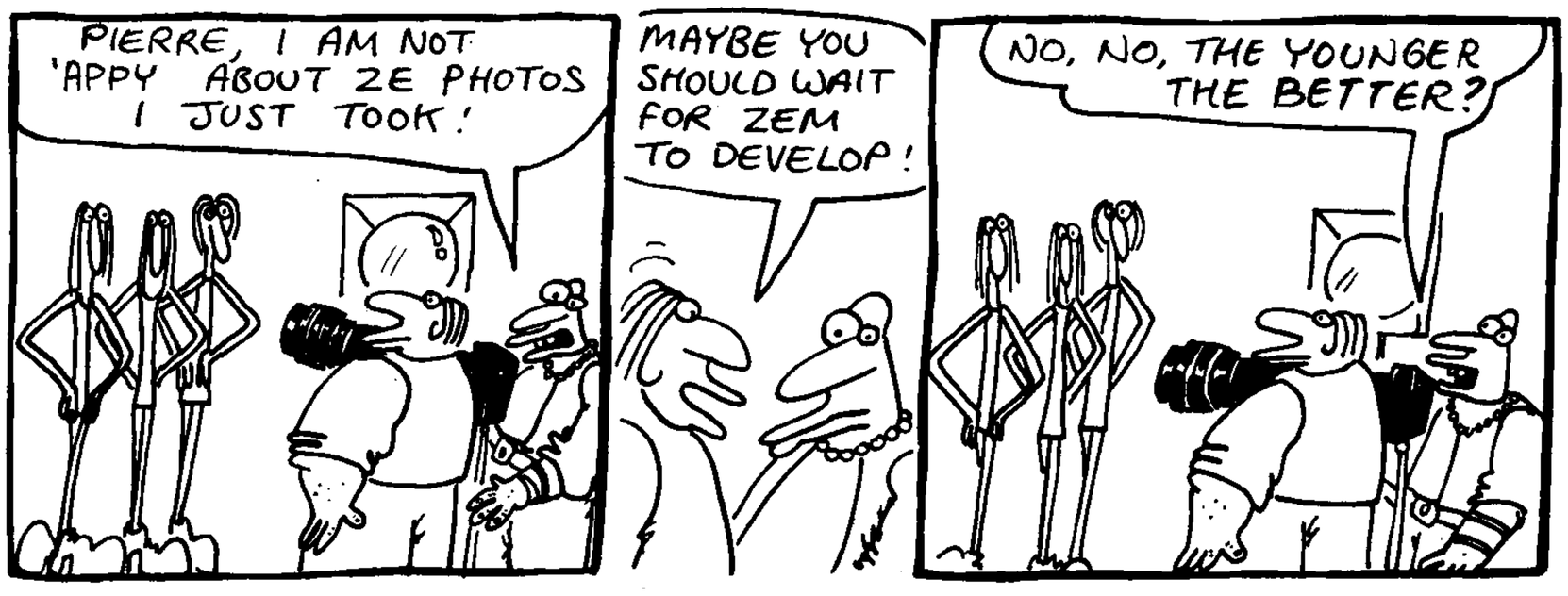
Except for
Frank Sinatra.
Who is still
Alive.

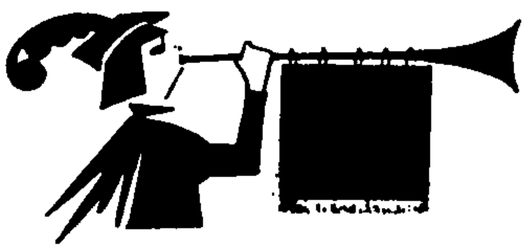
But only just
As we
Go to press.

(Eno J. Thribbetti, 17½)

SUPERMODELS

KERBER





PANTOMIME ROUND-UP

The Eye's guide to the best pantomimes around the country this festive season

THE OCTAGON, REDDITCH

Puss in Boots with Mariella Frostrup as Dick Whittington, Jerome and Robson as The Singing Cats, and Bernie "Riots" Grant as the Lord Mayor of London.

THE MALTINGS, CLWYD

Cinderella with Lynsey de Paul as Cinders, Kevin "Peak Practice" Whately as Buttons, and Will Carling and Victor Obugu as the Ugly Sisters. Special appearance by Sister Wendy Beckett as the Fairy Godmother.

THE ROUNDHOUSE, DUNFERMLINE

Aladdin with TV's Craig "Red Dwarf" Charles as Aladdin, Gyles Brandreth MP as Wishy-Washy, The Kwik-Fit Fitters as the Palace Guard, and a special appearance by Salman "Fatwah" Rushdie as the Genie.

THEATRE ROYAL, TRURO

Peter Pan with Jan Leeming as Peter, Sir John "Troubleshooter" Harvey-Jones as Captain Hook, England Triple-Jumper Jonathan Edwards (BBC Sports Personality of the Year) as Mr Smee and Chart-Toppers East 17 as the Lost Boys.

THE HIPPODROME, RAMSGATE

Jack and the Beanstalk with Mary Ann "The Times" Sieghart (shortly to star in TV's Brains Trust) as Jack, Mystic Meg as the Beanseller, Sir Bernard Ingham as the Giant and introducing BBC legal correspondent Joshua Rozenberg as the Pirate King.

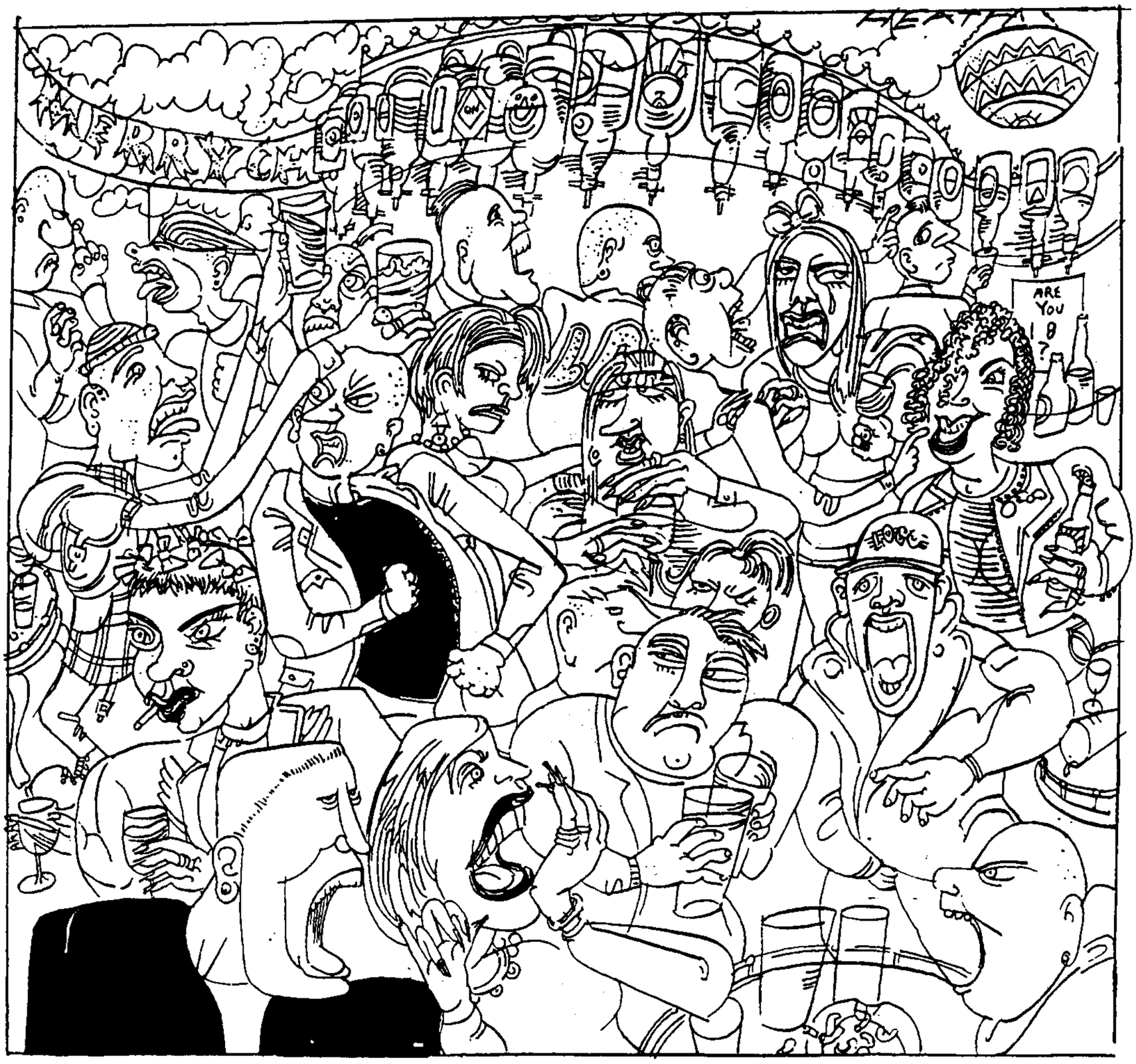
THE HAYWARDS HEATH LITTLE THEATRE

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs with Janet Street-Porter as Snow White, Delia "Winter Collection" Smith as the Wicked Witch and Major James Hewitt as Prince Charming. *Plus* the Stars of TV's *Moral Maze* as the Seven Dwarfs, including Rabbi Hugo "Happy" Grimme, Ed "Grumpy" Pearce, Janet "Bashful" Daley and Dr David "Queeny" Starkey.

(That's enough Panto. Ed.)

(Oh, no, it isn't.)

(Oh, yes, it is. Ed.)



Great Bores Of Today.

"...there was absolutely nothing on to watch... bugger all... I've never known a Christmas like it... four channels and every one a bummer... we hardly turned the set on apart from obviously One Foot in the Grave which was brilliant and The Thin Blue Line that was good but apart from that there was nothing else oh Wallace and Gromit was great and I really enjoyed Hook which I hadn't seen before but the standard was pitiful and there was nothing religious except Alan Bennett but then he's always good it was pathetic you'd think they'd make some effort to put on *something* worth watching where were all the great films? admittedly it was good to see E.T. again, and Indiana Jones is pretty amazing and My Fair Lady was good fun as always and Rear Window is a classic I can watch that again and again did you see The Coronation Street Special? that was *really* moving but generally when you look back there was literally nothing on at all except Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines which was the one programme the whole family wanted to watch it had Terry Thomas Peter Cook Dudley Moore Hancock no really it was a pity it clashed with Christmas With Richard and Judy... but there was absolutely nothing on..."

Your Trains Tonight

London to Edinburgh

The previous services on this route have been cancelled and replaced by the now privatised Stagecoach service, starting January 1st and arriving on February 23rd (due to wrong kind of roads).

Following a massive investment programme, the Stagecoach company is proud to introduce its new rolling stock, consisting of one 4-seater coach (unsprung) and the latest 6-horsepower locomotive unit (6 horses), named in honour of the father of daylight robbery Mr Richard Turpin.

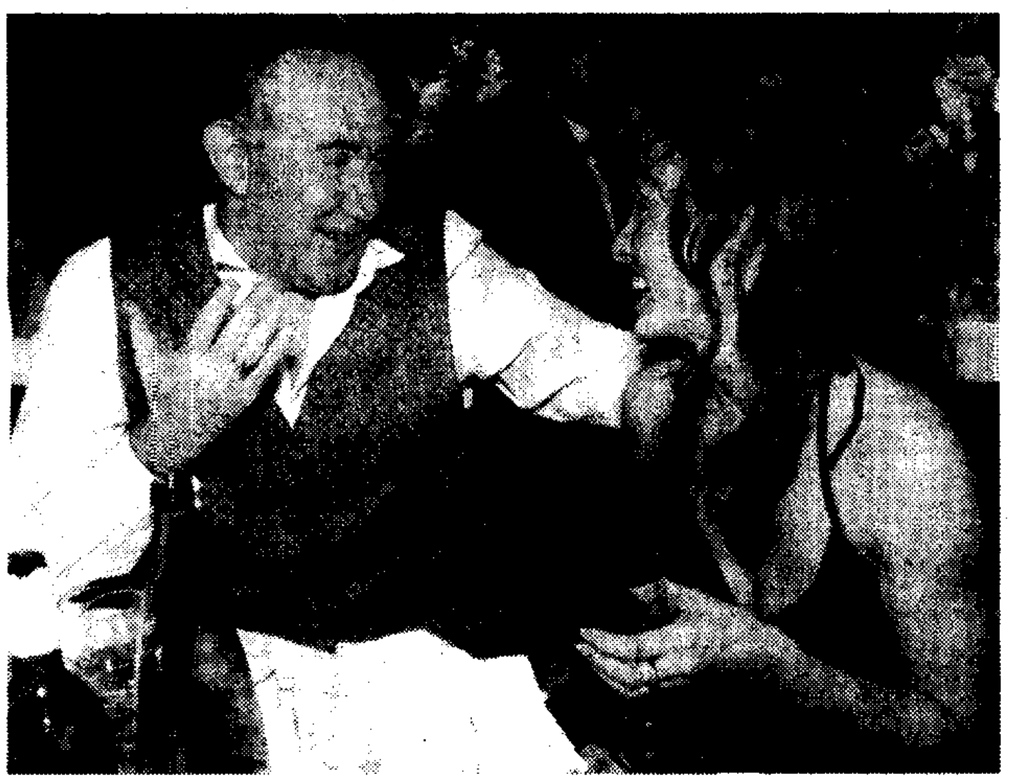
Following the recent court case, the company will of course act in accordance with the Government's new, revised guidelines, which insist that "the new franchisees must provide a broadly similar sort of service to the one before, but not to bother too much if it seems too expensive and they don't feel like it".

© Sir Geo. Young Bt.

Continuing the hugely popular Sunday Supplement feature you can read exclusively in every paper...

UP FRONTERS

AT THE NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTIES



It's good to talk says BT's **Mr Hoskins**! Watch out, **Miss Crawford**, he's after a night of **Cindy**! **Bob**'s your uncle or rather he's old enough to be your grandfather!

You're **Fayed**! Only joking **Mohamed**! Heard the News! It's Channel Four's own **Zenab Badawi** on your arm! Bet you didn't get her at Harrods!

They've picked a **Duff** one here all right? They've boxed the promoter in and now **Marianne**'s looking **Faithfull** and her friend looks a bit **Sade**! The two girl singers must be taking the **Mickey**! *(You're fired. Ed.)*

The **Campbell**s are coming! And what's the **Naomi** of the mystery man behind the balloon! Don't all **Rushdie** at once! Of course, it's **Salman**, and we've smoked him out! *(This is pathetic even for New Year, Ed.)*

Mad **Russ** gets **Abbott** a bit! And the bit in question is none other than Hollywood's **Michelle Pfeiffer**. There must be a twist somewhere!

(That's enough pisspoor captions to dreary PR photos written by sad old hacks)

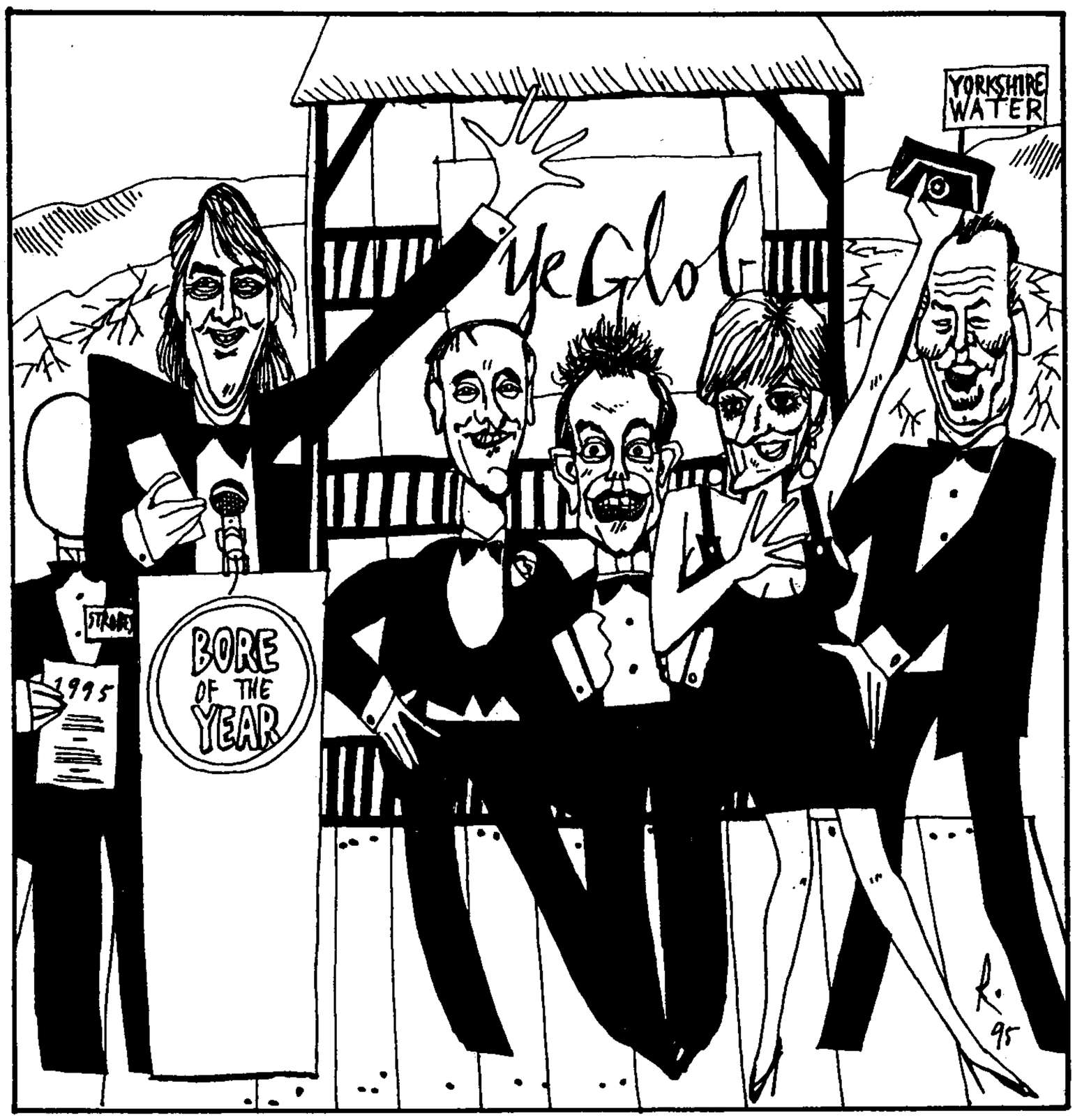
Celeb

LIGGER

JOHNSON. I CAN'T LET GARY SEE THE MORNING PAPER LIKE THIS... IT'S A DISGRACE.
SORRY MADAM.
THIS IS A VERY POOR SHOW, JOHNSON. YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN THIS.
I WASN'T THINKING.
MAKE SURE YOU RUN THE IRON OVER IT BEFORE YOU TAKE IT UP TO HIM.
VERY WELL, MADAM. RIGHT AWAY.
NO REVIEW OF LAST NIGHT'S GIG?
NO SIR. AND SORRY FOR YET ANOTHER ACCIDENT WITH THE IRON...

NO STORM ERUPTS AS SKY BUYS RIGHTS TO BORE OF YEAR AWARDS

by Our Telegraph Bores Team **Dominic Bawson and Charles Bore**



BBC executives were said to be "over the moon" yesterday at the news that Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV has signed a 100-year exclusive deal with Lord Gnome to broadcast the annual Bores of the Year ceremony for an undisclosed fee (25p per annum).

This year's ceremony, which will now only be seen by cable subscribers to Sky's The Boredom Channel, was originally to have been held in the garden of 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, but this was vetoed after the Official Solicitor, acting on behalf of the Estate of the late Frederick West Esq, had demanded a fee of £2 million.

The venue was then changed to the bed of an empty reservoir somewhere in the north of England, the property of Yorkshire Water plc.

Guests were ferried in from all over the country crammed into veal lorries, running a gauntlet of screaming animal rights protestors. They then took their places in a life-size replica of the Globe Theatre constructed out of recycled asbestos on the expanse of cracked mud and paid for with the aid of £20 million from the National Lottery.

300 Years of Purcell

MR **Emanuel Strobes** then stepped on to the stage to introduce the host for the evening, the celebrated comedian and author, **Sir Stephen Fry OM**.

Sadly, however, Sir Stephen was unable to be present, due to having run away to Bruges. Nevertheless, he had sent a message via the Internet which read: "To: all@gnomebores.com — please please forgive a naughty boy for letting you all down so terribly but everything got on top of me including a delightful bar steward whom I met on the ferry message ends. stephenf@fluffybun.co.bruges".

At this point there was a commotion amongst the groundlings, as the swaying figure of **Mr Simon Grayman**, an unemployed playwright, stood up and began to shout: "He's ruined my life and the life of everyone here tonight. I'm jolly well going to write a book about him, just you wait and see if I don't".

There were cries of "Shame!" as Mr Grayman was led off for a course of therapy at the Kingsley Amis Memorial Clinic.

Net Book Agreement

MR Fry's place was immediately taken at short notice by **Mr Jonathan Ross**, Britain's leading awards ceremony host, who began by reading out a number of "jokes" specially written for the occasion by **Mr Daniel Baker**, Britain's leading scriptwriter for people presenting awards ceremonies.

Finally, after guests had begun yawning in anticipation, Mr Ross read out the nominations for the much-coveted Grand Bore of the Year Award for 1995.

"For most of the year," he said "there was one obvious front-runner who completely dominated the world of tedium with his exciting New Labore Party. **Mr Tony Blore**, sorry, **Blur**, sorry, **Oasis** *(pause for no laughter)*. He was, however, swept aside in the final weeks by someone who, with just one TV broadcast, generated more boredom than anyone could ever have thought possible. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a sleeping ovation to the Queen of Bores, **Mother Diana of Kensington**."

The shy, retiring young Princess then ran eagerly up into the limelight and spoke movingly for several hours about how she hated publicity and just wanted to be left alone in a studio with **Mr Bashir Patel** to make a sequel to her award-winning documentary "What A Bastard My Husband Is".

Pocahontas

MR Ross then opened an envelope and after removing a very large cheque made out to himself read out the winner of The Most Boring Newcomer of the Year Award.

The judges, he said, had been unanimous in their choice of **Mr John Redwood**, whose challenge to the most boring Prime Minister in history still managed to plumb new heights of tedium.

Speaking in a low but cerebral drone, Mr Redwood began to announce his 100-point plan for picking up the award, but this was rudely interrupted by a large crowd of spin doctors from both the major parties, led by **Dr "Hopscotch" Mawhinney** and **Mr Felix Mendelssohn**, screaming hysterically about "BBC bias" until it was pointed out that the ceremony was now exclusively on Sky which meant that no one would be watching.

Mr Ross then introduced another category making its debut, the "New Comer-Out of The Year" which had gone to **Mr Michael Barrybore**. The popular entertainer, alcoholic and award-winner, narrowly defeated the new Archbishop of York, **Dr Hope-Noonefindsout**, **Mr Ashby de la Pouffe MP** and a **Ms Julie Burchill**, who appeared by

kind permission of the late *Modern Review* magazine.

New Statesman

IN order to prevent the guests from leaving, entertainment was then provided by three elderly gentlemen carrying a cardboard effigy of a fourth who mimed to their latest non-hit single "Free As A Bored".

To shouts of "Who are they?", the **Fab Bore** began to reminisce about how **John** had had this idea for a song on the Mersey ferry on the way to see his Auntie Doris or was it Buddy Holly?

Guests were then served individual portions of **Mrs McCartney**'s BSE-free fruitburgers, washed down with 568-millilitre glasses of EU-approved apple shandy (produce of various EEC countries).

As the gruesome trio tottered from the stage, Mr Ross retook the microphone to announce the winner of the Group Bore of the Year award, which he said had this year presented the judges with a particularly difficult choice.

The candidates were:

- The Chairmen of the newly-privatised utilities led by **Mr Cedric Brown**, all on £500 million a year.
- The newly-privatised **England rugby team**, all on £500 million a year.
- **Ms Sara Dunant** and the team of pundits discussing the short-list for the Boreker Prize.
- The **EC Court of Human Rights**.
- The entire **legal teams** representing both sides in the **O.J. Simpson** trial.
- The **Nolan Committee**.

"And the winner," said Mr Ross "is the Nolan Committee."

Mr Justice Scott then bicycled onto the stage to accept the award on behalf of his colleague Lord Nolan, stating that his own report on how Mr Waldegrave sold Arms to Iraq would not now be available until the year 2001 at the earliest.

Sir Edward Heath

THE lights dimmed as those two legendary entertainers of World War Two, **Dame Cliff Richard** and **Sir Vera Lynn**, began to sing songs of the period, including *Bachelor Bore*, *Living Dull* and *We'll Sleep Again*.

A giant telescreen then lit up to reveal **Mr Geoffrey Borecott**, live from South Africa, giving a boreall-by-boreall commentary on the legendary four-day-long test match innings of 12 not out by England skipper **Mr Michael Atherton**, which Mr Borecott described as "perhaps the most heroically boring defensive innings ever played by an England batsman since my own 23 not out against Sri Lanka in 1967".

" 'appen, 'e got stook in," concluded Sir Geoffrey in his now celebrated impersonation of **Mr Rory Bremner** impersonating **Mr Keith Floyd** impersonating **Mr Desmond Lynam**.

35 Years of The Street

THE recumbent guests were then brought back to life by the passing round of Ecstasy tablets, in time to hear **Mr Nick Ross** (who had replaced Mr Jonathan Ross as presenter without anyone noticing) reading out the nominations for the "Most Boring

Double Act Award".

After taking calls from worried members of the public, Mr Ross showed photo-fits of the following:

- **Gilbert and George**, wanted for public defecation in a London art gallery.
- **Mr William Self** and **Mr Dave Stewart**, for their joint appearance on the mould-breaking Janet Street Borter Experience Show.
- **Mr Damien Hirst** and **himself**, cut into two equal halves and preserved in formaldehyde.
- **Mr Kenneth Clarke** and **Mr Eddie George** for their amusing three-monthly Treasury briefings on the need to cut interest rates by one quarter of one half percent, or not.
- *Guardian* columnists **Suzanne Bore** and **Dr Germaine Dreer** for their delightful public debate about whatever it was they had an argument about.

Unfortunately, the judges had drifted off into such a profound slumber during their deliberations that they had been unable to decide on a winner, so it was given by default to the **Saatchi Brothers** (**Maurice** and **Boris**) for their interminable legal dispute with their former agency over who had the right to be called the Marx Brothers.

Ms Mo Mowlam

THE ceremony then came to its grand finale, with the announcement of the Lord Rees-Mogg Award for a Lifetime's Service To Boredom.

To announce the winner the veteran film star **Mr Dudley Bore** was beamed in by satellite from his Beverley Hills mansion, Dunjokin.

"It is my privilege," the elderly Dagenham-born comedian droned, in a mid-Atlantic accent, "to present this award to **Mr John Cleese**. I am sure we all agree that John showed enormous courage, as I did, in giving up comedy in order to perform in commercials for some of our leading supermarket chains."

The audience was then treated to a selection of Mr Cleese's finest advertising films and training videos, including "Vote For The Alliance", "Stop Smoking Now", "How To Run A Board Meeting" and "10p Off This Can of Whiskas Until January".

Before Mr Cleese could claim the award, a vast fleet of Yorkshire Water tankers converged on the empty reservoir from every side, and disgorged the following items: 1 billion Instant scratch cards; 2 billion glossy pamphlets advertising Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party; 3 billion unsold copies of Martin Amis's *The Information*; 4 billion Aids Awareness ribbons; 5 billion chocolate "Euros", the exciting new Single European currency; 6 billion writs to various newspapers from Mr Jonathan Aitken MP; 7 billion dead fish discarded under the conservation rules of the Common Fisheries Policy; 8 billion useless copies of Mr Bill Gates's Windows '95 software package; 9 billion posters of Mr Colin Firth as D'Arcy in the BBC's award-winning adaptation of *Middlemarch*; 1 video of *The Vicar of Dibley*; and no IRA weapons at all.

As the last item failed to materialise, the band of the now-disbanded 17/21st Staffordshire, Durham, Cornwall and Highland Light Artillery Regiment struck up with the hit of this year's Last Night of the Proms, "Don't Panic" – a piece specially commissioned from **Sir Harrison Bortwistle**, by the BBC's Mr Proms himself **Sir John Bummond**. As the piercing notes and pounding drums reached a crescendo, the few surviving guests ran screaming from the arena, demanding asylum in Nigeria.

"You'll meet a goldfish... Oh, sorry, this isn't my crystal..."

ПРАВДЕУЕ

2 billion roubles or 1 chicken *Prop. R. MurdochSky*

Concern Grows Over Re-Emergence of Socialism

by Our Man In London
Lunchtime O'Leg Gordievsky

IT'S official! Only a few years after it was pronounced dead and buried for ever, Socialism is once more top of the agenda.

Unbelievably, in the harsh wintry streets of London, a disaffected populace is turning eagerly to the nostrums of a creed which everyone said had been discredited.

Taking his cue from the success of the New Communist Party in Russia, with its slogan "Tough on Vodka, tough on the causes of Vodka" (a coded attack on the policies of the reactionary dictator Yeltsin), the Socialist leader Tony Blair said yesterday: "There is no reason why you in the East should be alarmed at the prospect of a Socialist victory in the elections."

Blairsky and Thatch

"New Socialism," he said, "is just like your New Communism. We are the party of law and order and private enterprise.

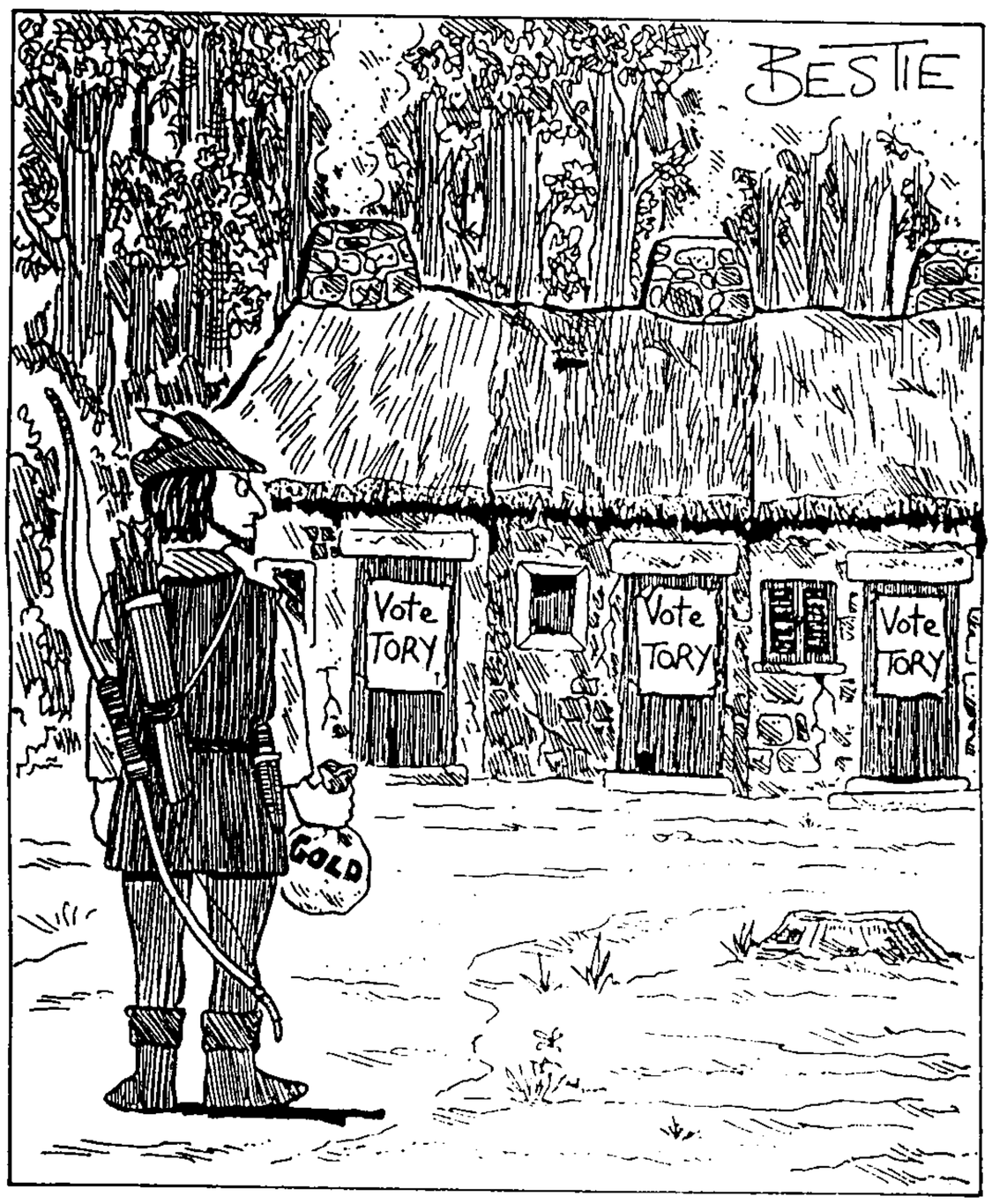
"We believe in New Socialism, New Labour, New Mcdonalds, New Coca-Cola, New Malden, New Zealand, home of the Trotskyite wrecker Gould, who will shortly be assassinated with an ice-pick following his recent treacherous article in the Evening Standard, '"Why I Am Going To Vote Tory" by Michael Howard'."

"A book and video 'Cooking With The Midnight Hags' are available from the usual outlets..."

You Decide: What Name Should Be Given To The New Single European Currency?

- ☐ The Euro
- ☐ The Ecu
- ☐ The Grobbelaar
- ☐ The Frostrup
- ☐ The Deutschmark
- ☐ The Toksvig
- ☐ The Oranjeeboom
- ☐ The Pound
- ☐ The Waldemar-Januscek
- ☐ The Häagen-Dazs
- ☐ The Bawbee
- ☐ The Petronella
- ☐ The Euro-Trash
- ☐ The Geldof

Simply phone 0898-7632542 and register your vote. (It won't count and the decision will be made by Chancellor Kohl.) Calls will be charged at 37 euros per second.



One day Robin Hood realised he'd given too much money to the poor

ASHBY LOSES LIBEL CASE

Bethlehem ★ Star

incorporating the International Herald Angel

Inquiry Into 'No Room At Inn' Scandal

by Our Reporting Pool
Matthew, Mark and Luke with additional material by **John**.

THE shocking story of one mother's attempt to secure adequate facilities for childbirth has thrown the Judaean Health Service into a new controversy. The mother-to-be, known only as Mary, though resident in Galilee had to travel all the way to Bethlehem by donkey to try and secure a bed.

But on arrival she was informed by the Inn Trust Manager that they were completely full up due to unforeseen circumstances, ie Christmas.

After a number of attempts to find neighbouring inn facilities, Mary and her birth partner were forced to make do with a manger in a lowly cattle shed.

Said a spokesman for the Judaean Health Authority: "This is a very rare incident in which a bed was sought outside office hours at a holiday period. Let there be no worry that the health of children in this country is in no way in danger under this Government".

LATE NEWS

Firstborn to be massacred — Herod's leaked memo

CHRISTMAS SALES START EARLY AT BRIXTONS!

Look at these amazing reductions!!

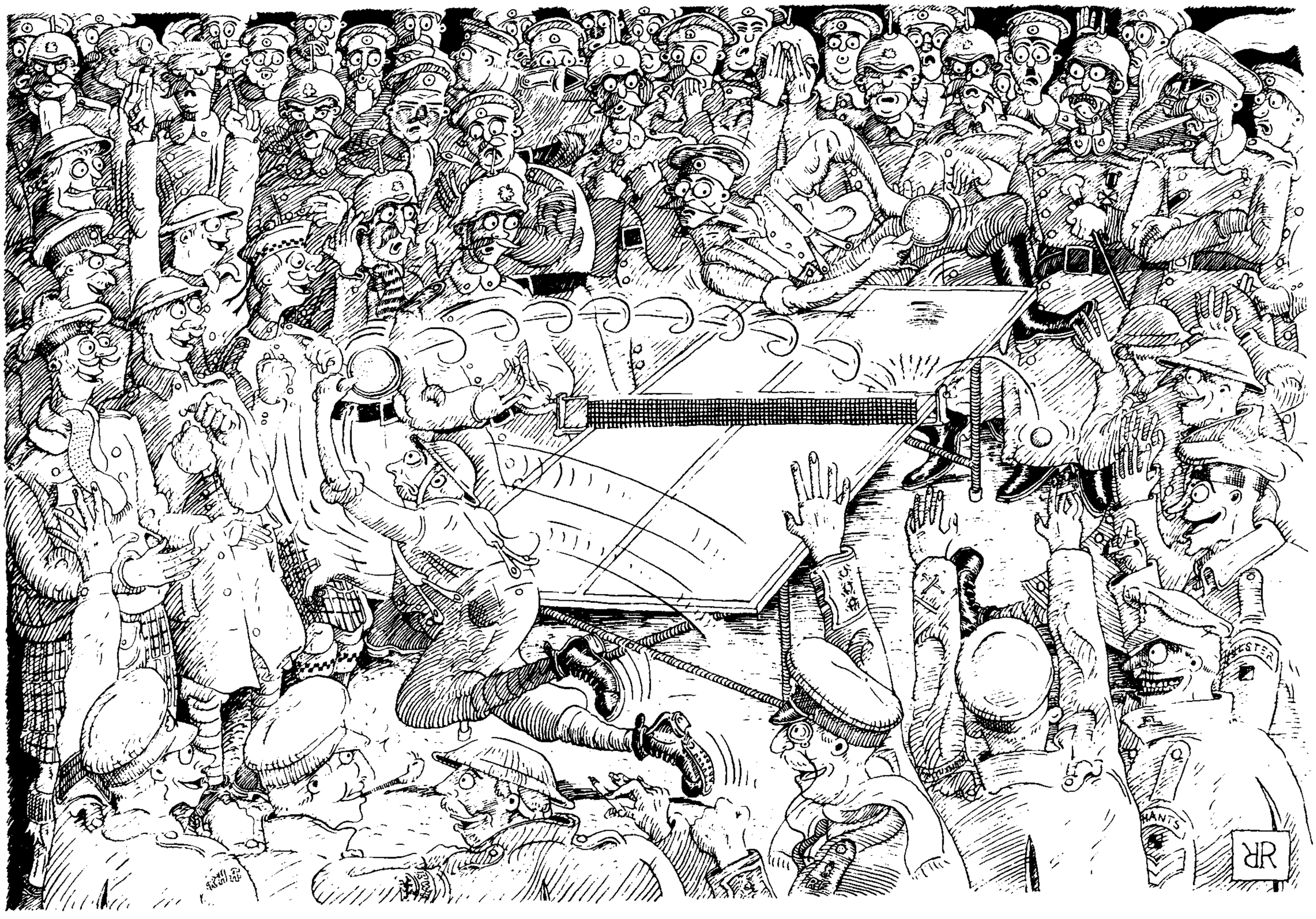
Pair of Nike Trainers
was £87.95
now COMPLETELY FREE!

Laptop CD-ROM Computer
was £1,870.75
now ZIPPO!

Mini Discman Stereo System
was £279.99
now NOTHING AT ALL!

* Yes! Everything's just walking out of the shop in the biggest sales stampede ever!
Takeaway prices!
* And no charges whatsoever!

Says Inspector Knacker: "This stuff's hot, hot, hot and not only because the shop's on fire!"



Der Grosse Tischtennis Waffenstandstill, Weinachten 1914

DIARY

A New Year's Message from Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales

DIANA, QUEEN OF HEARTS

At this time of year, we are all of us feeling just that little bit daunted by the daunting environment that lies ahead. I understand, albeit because I care. But the poor and the starving and the dying have their role to play too. The poor are people who don't have sufficient environmental resources. The starving are people who are not able to finance their eating disorders. And the dying are people who find themselves at a low ebb. These are valuable roles to play and necessary to our own happiness and fulfilment. For who else would we care for if it were not for the poor and the starving and the dying? I know from my own experience in this environment that for many years I tried desperately to care for the wealthy, the well-fed and the still-living. "Something tells me you're pretty miserable, am I right?" I would say to healthy, well-off people. "Go on — I can give you all the time in the world — have a jolly good weep — let it out." But no matter how hard I cared, these people simply wouldn't keep still, often moving to the other side of the room.This was obviously distressing for me. But then I discovered that there are millions of ordinary people out there who are simply not able to move away in this manner. Many of them are in hospital, stuck in bed, unable to walk or run. And to these people I hold out my hand. "Let me share in your pain, let me draw strength from your agony, let me open the floodgates of your suffering and paddle in a lovely warm pool of caring, because deep down I'm as miserable as you must be," I tell them. Sometimes I worry that without me, there'd be no one around to cheer them up.

There were three of us in the marriage, and it was a little bit crowded. So to give myself more space, I formed a close friendship with James Gilbey. Then there were four of us in the marriage, and it was a little bit crowded. So to give myself more space, I entered into an intimate relationship with James Hewitt. Then there were five of us in the marriage, and it was a little bit crowded. So to give myself more space, I formed a close attachment to Oliver Hoare. Then there were six of us in the marriage, and it was a little bit crowded. So to give myself more space, I enjoyed a friendship based on mutual trust and support with Will Carling. Then there were seven of us in the marriage, and it was a little bit crowded. So to give myself more space, I invited in a BBC Panorama television crew. Then there were three hundred million people worldwide in the marriage, and it was a little bit crowded.

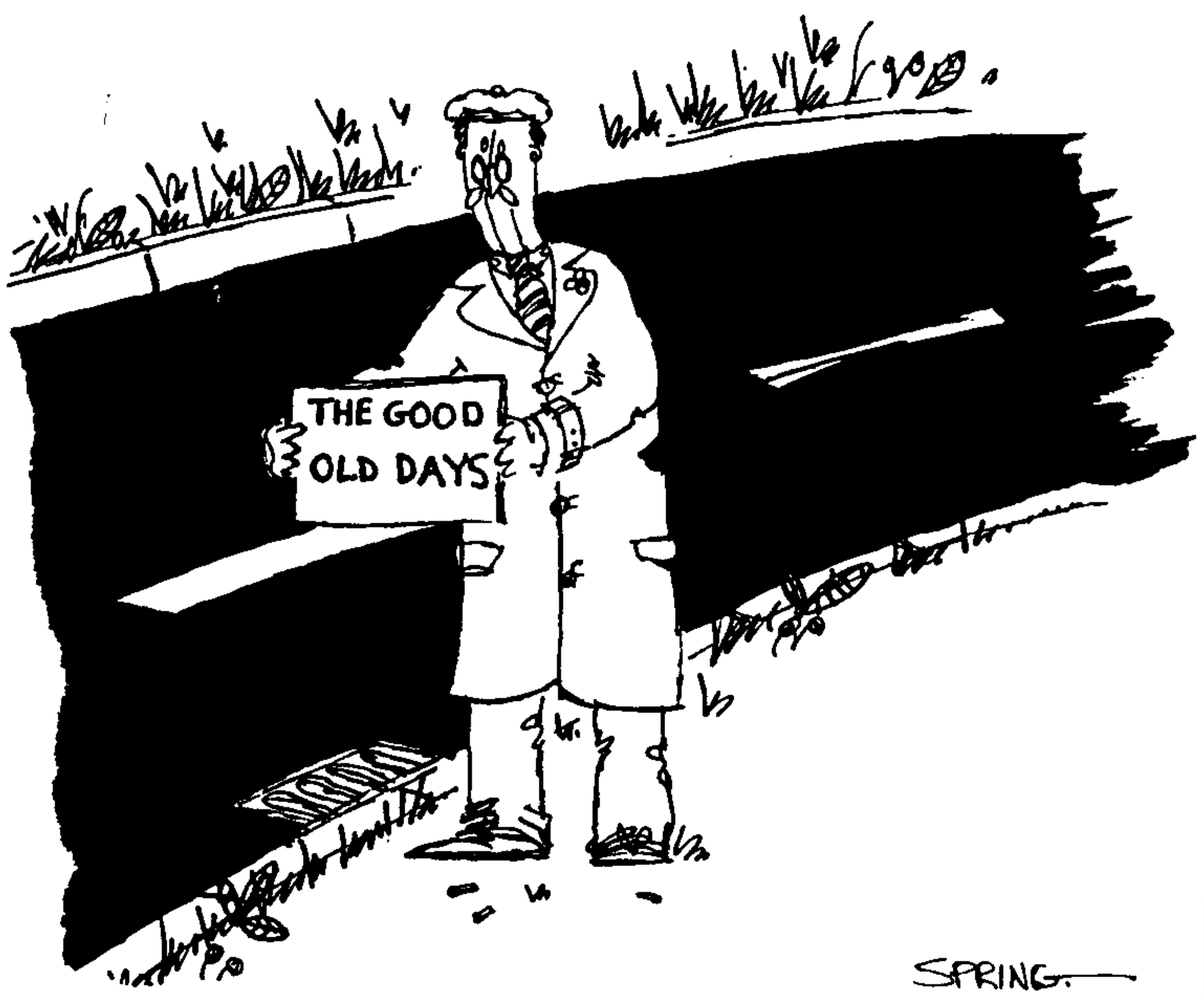
I have two children to bring up. And I can't even remember having eaten them. But honestly I wish everyone would understand that the privacy of my two boys is all I care about. I want them to be able to live the private lives of ordinary citizens, without their every move being reported in public. But the media pressure can be terrible, with people wanting to pry into our very private conversations, such as the one on the marriage break-up I was telling BBC Panorama about only last month, and the one about the Hewitt revelations, when William produced a box of chocolates and said something so private that I've never forgotten it. He said, "Mummy, I think you've been hurt. These are to make you smile again". And that's the kind of really very private conversation I would never like splashed over the telly. After all, some things are meant to be secret, so it's high time everyone knew about them.

Contrary to millions of rumours put about by my enemies throughout the Royal Family, MI5, the Establishment and the Government, I am not paranoid. Nor am I unbalanced, and I would fall over backwards to prove it. I had bulimia for a number of years, and people decided that that was the problem — Diana was unstable. So I wanted to shut the unstable door before I bolted the horse. I was crying out for help, and people were using my bulimia as a sort of coat on a hanger, trying to put it on my shoulders, and the hat wouldn't fit, but the bulimia tag stuck, and they were always bringing it up, making me out to be unwell. What I always say is there's no better way of isolating a mantelpiece than to depersonalise it. But all I was doing was inflicting injury on my legs and my arms out of low sofa steam. But I'm not aggressive. I want to knock that one on the head again and again and again very, very hard. Because I now know I have a roll to fill, and when I have filled that roll I want to put it in my basket-case. So will people please stop calling me crazy? Very much so. Albeit.

Just before Christmas, I was privileged to receive the Humanitarian of the Year Award for all my work as the Queen of Hearts. "Let us not wait to be asked. Let us demonstrate our compression and inanity now," I said. "Women everywhere feel the need to share my pain and my loneliness, my worries and my stresses, my wallet and my dresses. For in this way ordinary little people can witness the sufferings of those more glamorous and beautiful than themselves, and hopefully learn not to be so self-absorbed."

Yes, I have been through the living hell of marrying into the richest family in Britain, being adored by many hundreds of millions and being hailed by the international press as the most beautiful woman in the world. Yes, it was a nightmare, but I have come out the other side. And now I know what ordinary people in the same situation go through every day. And that is why from this day hence I am proud to be your Queen of Hearts. Love ya. D.

**Illustration from 'Condimentos Winsor' sweet packet, Colombia*



New Tory candidate

● **Judith Le Maistre.**

GREAT Wyrley woman Judith Le Maistre has been selected as prospective parliamentary candidate by the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party.

Cannock Mercury

DIANA: THE GODDESS WHO HUNTS ALONE

Carlos Fuentes

'Is something preferable to everything or nothing? That's what I asked myself when the love affair I'm going to tell you about here was over.' So begins this extraordinary novel from the internationally acclaimed Carlos Fuentes - the story of an affair that rages out of control from passion, through paranoia and sexual jealousy to madness. *256pp.*

Waterstone's catalogue

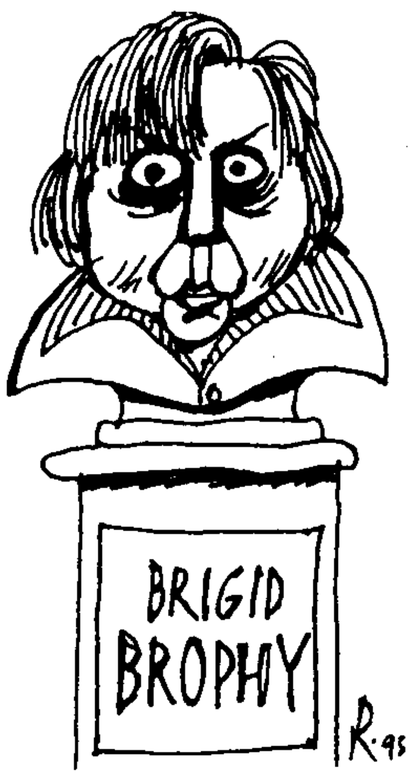
One caller was told that it might be safer not to eat beef – or beef products like Bovril.

This drew an immediate angry response from the makers of Bovril – who pointed out that the beef used comes from Argentina – and from Food Minister and Tiverton MP Angela Browning.

Western Morning Press

Literary Review

The Brophy trophy



The Reader's Companion to Twentieth Century Writers
Peter Parker (Ed)
(Helicon/Fourth Estate, £25)

IN THE old days, of course, reference books were simply reference books. These days, the market being a tad crowded, the tendency is to reference books with *attitude*: compendia that make a virtue out of their exclusions, their procedural quirks or the particular ideological line they peddle.

So it is with Peter Parker's *Reader's Companion to Twentieth Century Writers*, a high old catalogue of gender judgement and style totems whose absurdities are just the most delicious fun to anyone in the know.

Another thing about the modern reference book is its habitual cargo of mistakes. No point in going on about it, but I did note one or two teeny errors in, say, the entry for Alexander Raban Waugh, Bron's late uncle Alec and the elder brother of Evelyn. No, he didn't die in 1961; and no he didn't divorce his second wife to marry the third (the second one died). Among a long line of publications *No Quarter* and *Tropic Seed* are actually English and American versions of the same book, as are *So Lovers Dream* and *That American Woman*. Oh, and the novel he produced in 1938 was called *Going Their Own Ways*, not *Getting Their Own Way*.

Oh dear, oh dear. But let's not be pedantic. Let's be investigative. This is a literary companion. What qualities do you need to get in? Now, I don't want to cast the tiniest aspersions on Mr Parker's happy band of contributors, but it is dramatically clear that for the purposes of being included here no writer is as absolutely OK as a gay one. Firbank and Forster get yards of space, and why not? But how to explain the profuse and admiring coverage afforded to marginal and mostly forgotten novelists such as C.H.B. Kitchin, T.C. Worsley and Jocelyn Brooke? Inverts to a man, my dears. Giants of the contemporary novel? Take a bow messrs Hollinghurst, Bailey and Mars-Jones.

Never mind about being gay: the other advantage for aspiring entrants, oddly enough, is to be called Brigid Brophy. It might be said, in fact, that an infatuation with Ms Brophy (who died not long ago), her works and opinions is one of the book's distinguishing features.

A two-column encomium (for purposes of comparison, Anthony Powell gets about half this) concludes that "her seven novels are among the most stylish, intelligent and underrated fictions of the century", which is fair enough perhaps. Thereafter Ms Brophy turns up everywhere — in the biographies of half-a-dozen other writers, and to provide ballast for iffy critical judgements. Haven't read Gore Vidal's *Myra Breckinridge*? Well, our Brigid thought it was a masterpiece of "the high baroque comedy of bad taste". Didn't get round to A.N. Wilson's children's book *Stray*? Shame: Brigid reckoned it a classic to be read alongside *Black Beauty*.

Perhaps Ms Brody's professed bisexuality had something to do with it. I don't know. Two other animating principles will perhaps have become apparent by now. The first is a stupefying gladhandedness. Candia McWilliam does indeed knock off the odd critical piece, but "noted for the seriousness and generosity of the book reviews she writes"? (By whom? Her husband? Her agent? All the little McWilliams?) Similarly Anthony Thwaite has been a sedulous labourer in the literary vineyard, but "the nearest thing to the leading man of letters that the late twentieth century can produce"?

The other flagrant caste marke is a fixation with gossip. You can hardly blame the compilers for this — gossip after all is now a widely regarded substitute for literary criticism — but, lawks, here it all is *again* — all the chaff from the last decade's books diaries in lavish and quite unnecessary detail: *l'affaire* Amis: how a stockbroker proposed to marry Jeanette and set her up in a country cottage: the dusty non-revelation that Fiona Pitt-Kethley's novel *The Misfortunes of Nigel*, "about a sex-obsessed, misogynist, wimpish writer married to a circus artiste, is allegedly inspired by the poet Hugo Williams, who — so the author claims — failed to appreciate her sufficiently". Still, there are one or two goodish jokes, and it is somehow consoling to learn that Salman Rushdie's first name is really Ahmed.

Books & Bookmen

■ PHILIP Hoare's new 605-page life of Noel Coward, revered by luvvies as "The Master", has been promoted as the definitive biography — though its sensitive young author, who was just 14 when Coward popped his false teeth, and who never met him, tells us little that is new and much that is very, very old.

The principal drama in this opus is not to be found between its covers. It began six weeks before publication when the well-preserved musical star Pat Kirkwood saw a proof copy and took furious exception to a reference to herself, mentioning her celebrated legs, in direct relation to Prince Philip. Kirkwood's husband, solicitor Peter Knight, threatened Hoare's publisher with a libel writ; printing was halted and Prince Philip's name was removed from its proximity to Kirkwood's.

Shortly afterwards anonymous letters were circulated to literary editors drawing attention to the absence from Hoare's text of the royal biographer Michael Thornton. An odd omission, given that Thornton wrote an article in the *Independent on Sunday* four years ago describing how The Master had laid hands upon him when Thornton was a 19-year-old undergraduate, and that they finally partook of Ugandan discussions in a flat in Belgravia in 1966. Coward, apparently, referred to his young lover as "Cherub".

The publication of Thornton's revelations provoked protests from the bedridden Marlene Dietrich, who said of Thornton: "Noel adored that young man and went out of his way to help him when he first became a critic in London. He would be hurt and horrified." Coward's portly literary executor, Sheridan Morley, also weighed in, denouncing Thornton's confession as "a vicious attack".

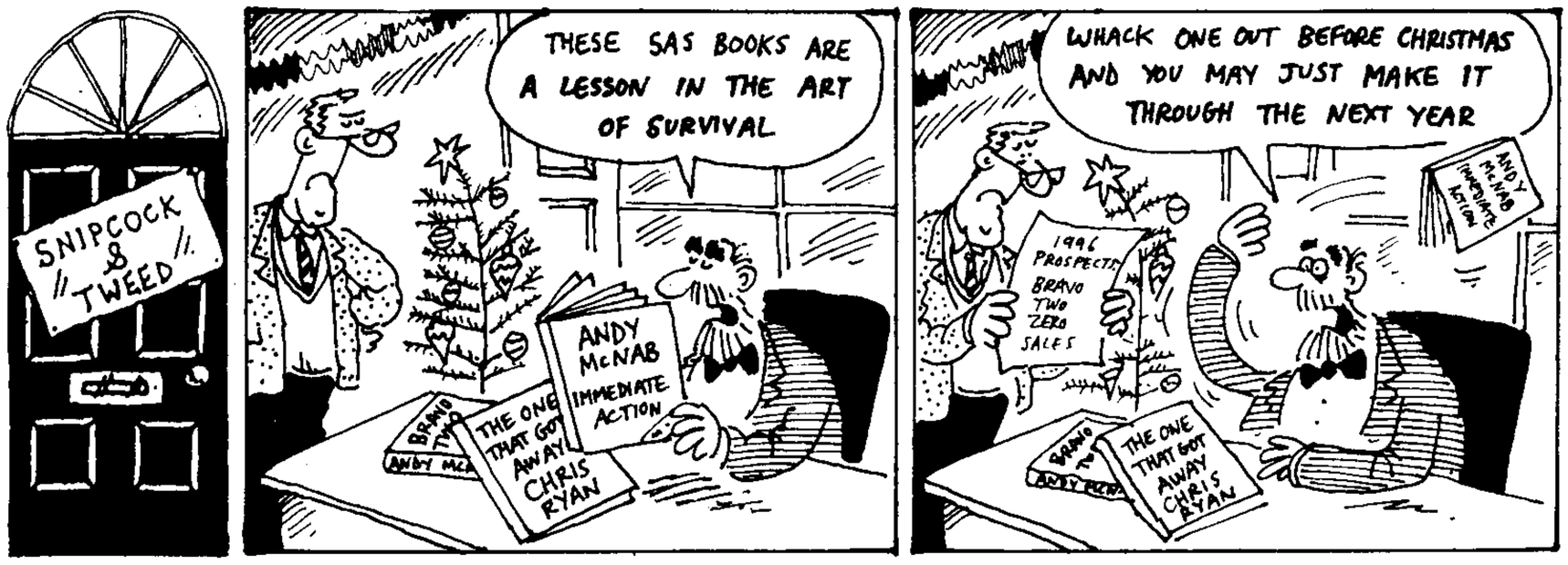
Philip Hoare was then researching his book and was expecting material from Coward's ex-Cherub. But Thornton abruptly changed his mind and asked Hoare to omit all reference to him from the book. The anonymous letters resurrecting this episode, circulated last November, led two national newspapers to conclude that Thornton must have written them himself. John Walsh of the *Independent* quoted Hoare as alleging that Thornton had suffered "a lifetime's resentment" over Coward, while Peter McLie of the London *Evening Standard*, and his aptly-named sidekick Rohan Daft, seized upon the anonymous missives as an opportunity to avenge themselves on Thornton for having given evidence against them in a libel action last summer. McLie and Daft quoted Hoare as alleging that Thornton "seems to follow me about town", noting the identity of his first-night companions.

Thornton, who had until then been unaware of the letters, promptly threatened McLie and Daft with a writ — whereupon the dismal duo were aghast to discover that Thornton had never even met Hoare. They were forced to publish a grovelling apology, as were John Walsh and the *Indie*.

Hoare himself, the 37-year-old son of a Southampton cable tester, and the tenant of a ninth-floor council flat in Shoreditch, pleaded poverty when he too was pursued by Thornton's lawyers, pointing out that he had failed to sell the serial rights in his Coward book. He was let off with a contribution of £200, plus a written apology: "I acknowledge that these remarks were not true..."

The hapless author has clearly been as hemmed in by the Coward estate as previous biographers who have attempted to rescue The Master from the treacly reverence insisted upon by his intimate cronies. Charles Russell, for example, Coward's New York representative, provided much of what new material Hoare does offer, yet his name is not in the acknowledgements. Could this be because Russell had a seismic falling-out with Coward and his circle, and his inclusion would have infuriated the all-powerful Sheridan Morley? Hoare's explanation, when challenged by Russell, is that acknowledgement *was* made originally, but that two pages unaccountably went missing. Of course.

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
THESE SAS BOOKS ARE A LESSON IN THE ART OF SURVIVAL
ANDY McNAB
IMMEDIATE ACTION
THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY
CHRIS RYAN
WHACK ONE OUT BEFORE CHRISTMAS AND YOU MAY JUST MAKE IT THROUGH THE NEXT YEAR
1996 PROSPECTS
BRAVO TWO ZERO SALES
THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY
CHRIS RYAN

REMAINDERS OF THE FUCKING DAY

THE BOOK: James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late.*

THE HYPE: Published by Secker & Warburg, the book is best known for its plentiful profanities and for winning the 1994 Booker prize.

THE ADVANCE: Kept secret as Kelman is a loyal Sucker & Windbag author, though insiders believe it was enormous.

THE PRICE: Originally £14.99. Last seen in Galloway and Porter, Cambridge, for £1.

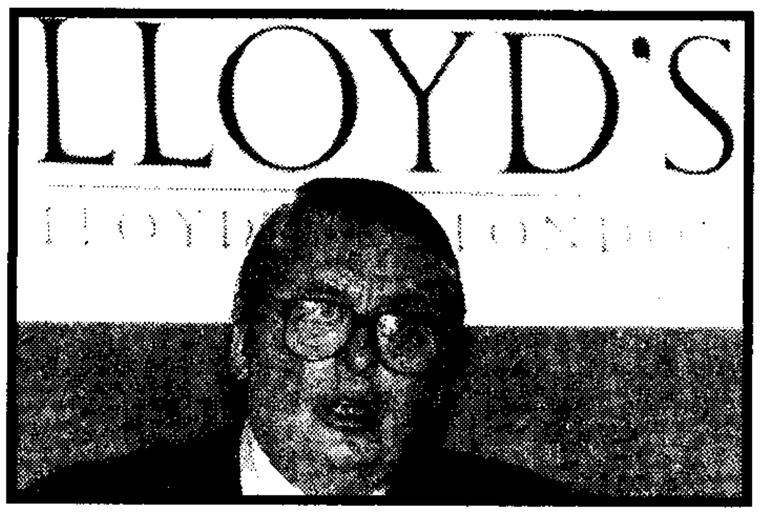
footnotes

THE GRAPES OF ROTHSCHILD

IT WOULD be a grave injustice if the credit for the awful mess the government has made with the national lottery is not given where it is due: to N.M. Rothschild & Sons, the celebrated merchant bankers.

For years Rothschild lamented the stubborn refusal of its Methodist heroine, Margaret Thatcher, to contemplate a national lottery. Hardly was her political corpse cold, therefore, than Rothschild started to lobby her successor. In May 1991 the bank circulated to interested parties, especially the treasury, a paper entitled *A National Lottery, How it Could Be Established.*

The document argued for a "single national lottery awarded to a single manager under franchise". It "assumed" that "government would leave management and operation to the private sector but with appropriate regulation". In this sense, argued Rothschild, the lottery would be very much the same as "the major utility privatisations" out of which Rothschild had made such an enormous amount of money. The lucky franchise winner would be a private company with equity capital whose basic aim would be the same as that of those precious utilities: to fill the pockets of its shareholders.



BABY SYNDICATE SPECIALIST: Mr David Coleridge

The argument was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm in the treasury, which was then under the control of a former Rothschild man, Norman Lamont. A year later Lamont's team was joined by a new economic secretary, Anthony Nelson MP, another former Rothschild man.

The chief secretary to the treasury was David Mellor, who, after the 1992 election, took charge of the new department of national heritage and started talks about the lottery. Mellor, his successor Peter Brooke and permanent secretary Haydn Phillips were all gung-ho for the Rothschild plan.

The lottery monopoly was safe, and Rothschild promptly formed a consortium to bid for it. To the bank's horror, it came second! The newly-appointed regulator Peter Davis coolly ignored all Rothschild's careful groundwork and handed the monopoly instead to G-TECH, which was even richer and more enterprising than Rothschild, and which had the good sense to ferry the regulator around America in its private plane for free.

PS: The beleaguered Oflot Davis has been supported to the hilt by David Coleridge, former chairman of Sturge Holdings. Coleridge described Davis, whom he appointed deputy chairman of Sturge, as "totally honest and of the highest probity".

Could this be the same David Coleridge who was interviewed on Channel Four Television when he was chairman of the insurance market Lloyd's? The interview was memorable for Coleridge's forthright attack on "baby syndicates" whereby the best part of the action at Lloyd's was hived off into specialised syndicates run by the fattest cats in the market — and for the prompt reminder by the interviewer that Coleridge himself had been a member of a notorious baby syndicates in December 1991.

PPS: Another more circumspect Oflot supporter is Lady Thatcher's former favourite PR man, Sir Tim Bell, who counts the American operator G-TECH among his clients. Bell's team lobbied hard against the BBC's *Panorama* programme on the lottery, which did such damage to G-TECH. Bell cannot have been entirely unhappy at his firm's failure to stop the programme — another of his important clients is the BBC.

The Vallance Sheet

■ THE Greenbury committee on fat cats' pay was very severe on executive salary scams in the "privatised utilities".

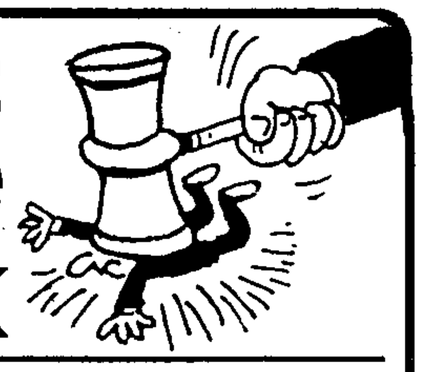
The relevant passage reads: "Main action points. The privatised water and energy companies should review comprehensively their existing remuneration packages in the light of this report, adjust them on a voluntary basis as necessary and make a full report to shareholders for discussion at the first available AGM."

Tough stuff. But wait. Why are "privatised utilities" defined only as "water and energy companies"? What about telephones? British Telecom is just as monopolistic as the gas, electricity or water companies. Indeed, if BT isn't a monopoly why does it have to have a regulator just like the others?

Moreover, BT executives are every bit as greedy as their counterparts in water or gas. Who could forget the famous claim of BT's millionaire chief executive Ian Vallance in the Commons: "I work harder than junior doctors." And why did the Greenbury committee let BT off so lightly? Surely not because Ian Vallance was on the committee...

IAN VALLANCE

Beaks of the Week



JP's: Mrs S. Vaughan and Mrs L. Coyle

■ YVETTE Griffiths had just been deserted by her partner in the spring of 1993 when she was caught redhanded in breach of section 1(i) of the wireless and telegraphy act 1947: having a TV set without a licence for two years.

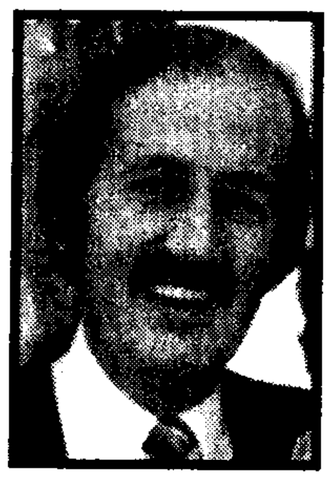
At the time of her offence she was struggling to care for her four children, in constant pain and distress from liver failure and blood disorders. Yvette was fined twice — £152 in 1993 and £200 in 1994. She had no money to pay and when bailiffs arrived to distrain her possessions, they found there was nothing to distrain. She was summoned to appear before Dudley magistrates, but could not do so because she was in intensive care.

When her case eventually came back to court on 23 March 1995 Yvette filled in the full details of her income — all from income support. Though the form was quite clear and quite truthful, the Dudley justices, Mrs S. Vaughan and Mrs L. Coyle, somehow concluded that Yvette was not on income support (though she was) and that therefore they could not deduct her fine from income support. So they sent her to prison for 14 days.

She spent five days in Risley before a prison officer managed to get the news of her imprisonment to a lawyer and she was instantly released. The case against the magistrates went to the high court, and the Dudley bench instructed solicitors and a barrister to defend their indefensible position. Only on the day before the case came to court did they finally throw in the towel and sign the consent order agreeing that they had acted unlawfully and therefore sparing Yvette Griffiths any more time in prison.

BEAN'S TALK

■ MRS Jo Cockell, whose husband, a tax inspector, died from Legionnaire's disease caught in Inland Revenue offices (*Eye* 886), has sent the *Eye* a copy of the letter she wrote to John Major on 7 November.



ADRIAN COCKELL

She wrote: "Will you explain to me why the Inland Revenue has crown immunity and why they cannot be prosecuted"? The reply came not from Major but from a Mr David Bean, controller of the Inland Revenue's south-east region. He makes two points:

● "The Inland Revenue has to comply with the health and safety act in the same way as any company or firm in industry."

● "However, section 48 of the act provides that sections 33 to 42 do not apply to the crown. This means that a department of the crown such as the Inland Revenue cannot be prosecuted."

In other words the revenue must obey the law, but if it breaks the law and causes someone's death as it did in the case of Mr Cockell, it can't be charged. So there's one safety law for the government and another for everyone else. Mrs Cockell wants to know why — but neither Mr Bean nor anyone else can tell her.

FIRST ELEVEN: The Leeds Development Corporation in natural pose, including, inserted, Stuart Kenny, top left, John Jackson, bottom left; and, standing David Richardson, left and Peter Hartley, third from left

The Rugger Buggers' Quango

NO TEAR was shed last March when Leeds Development Corporation (LDC), a quango appointed in 1988 by the Tory government, packed with local Tories and granted enormous planning powers over huge areas of the city, packed its bags and went away.

Its most outstanding achievement over seven years was a planning decision which brought £2.5 million to a rugby club of which three of the LDC's leading lights were vice-presidents. This ambitious development was clinched at the LDC's last gasp.

Way back in 1988 the LDC collaborated with Mountleigh, one of the City's most prestigious property speculators, to develop the green Kirkstall Valley in the middle of the city with not-so-green supermarkets and office blocks. The scheme faltered when Mountleigh went bust in 1992, owing a mere £900 million; but the rugby club element survived.

On April Fool's Day 1993 planning permission was sought by Kirkstall Valley Properties to develop a piece of land on and around the Leeds Rubgy Union Football Club ground. The club was handsomely represented on the Leeds Development Corporation. Two LDC members, David Richardson, a land agent, and John Jackson, a clothing manufacturer, were vice-presidents of the club; as was Mr Stuart Kenny, the LDC's director of development.

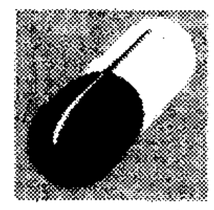
All three spotted a problem: if supermarkets were built on the rugby ground, no one could play rugby there. So the club hatched a plan to move to Shadwell in the green belt. Had the plan succeeded, it would have "freed" for development a piece of adjacent green belt land owned by the P.A.H. Hartley 1972 Settlement, a trust set up to benefit the family of P.A.H. Hartley, distinguished Leeds businessman and chairman of the LDC. The trustees of the P.A.H. Hartley 1972 Settlement were internationally-renowned accountants Rawlinson and Hunter, of 1 Hanover Square, London — also the registered address of Kirkstall Valley Properties.

Unhappily for the P.A.H. Hartley 1972 Settlement, the (elected) Leeds city council stuck by its green belt and turned the deal down flat. For a moment, prospects for the rugby club seemed gloomy. Then Kirkstall Valley Properties came up with a bright new idea: some of the club ground would be developed, but enough would be left for a game of rugby. This plan got outline planning permission from the development corporation in February 1995. A few days later, the club flogged off its ground to the supermarket chain Morrisons for a fantastic £2.5 million and leased some of it back for 99 years at a peppercorn rent. Final planning permission was granted on 29 March 1995 — the very last day of the corporation's existence.

All the parties were happy. The rugby club was hugely rich. Morrisons seemed certain to make millions from its new supermarket. The only hitch was the entire population of the area and their councillor John Illingworth, who had waged a long campaign against the development.

In November the campaign took the defunct LDC's planning permission to the high court for judicial review. Morrisons replied by demanding £85,000 "security for costs" from the campaign, many of whose organisers live on pensions and income support. On 15 December Mr Justice Dyson chucked out Morrisons' application, declaring it an attempt to prevent the case being heard. Costs were awarded against Morrisons and the case goes ahead in the new year.

Sterling's loss



AS THE controversy over a safe alternative to paracetamol spreads from the *Eye* (20 October) to other media, the *Eye* contacts Alan Rogerson, who developed the production process for the first "safe paracetamol".

Alan Rogerson joined the drug company Sterling-Winthrop in the 1970s. "At that time," he says, "the company's New York headquarters were in a panic since it seemed certain that the Federal Drug Authority were about to ban all over-the-counter sales of paracetamol, due to evidence of kidney and liver damage, and make it a prescription-only product in America."

Mr Rogerson went to work on a production process for a new paracetamol tablet incorporating methionine which protects the liver. The result was Pameton, marketed by Sterling from 1986.

Mr Rogerson supports the *Eye's* suggestion that Pameton was deliberately undersold in order to protect the enormous sales of paracetamol. Pameton, he says, was priced at eight times the cost of existing paracetamol tablets, despite low development and licensing costs, and despite the very low cost of methionine.

Asked why the new safer tablet was undersold, Mr Rogerson said: "It was a bit awkward selling one pill as a safe version of another, especially as paracetamol was Sterling's best-seller. To market Pameton as safe suggested paracetamol wasn't safe. So Pameton was buried."

Proof that this attitude prevailed in the company came in a letter to Mr Rogerson from Robin Mills, vice-president of Sterling in New York, in April 1993. A safe paracetamol exists already. It is regular paracetamol as taken by some 20 million people in the UK every year, which has a wide safety margin and no significant side effects." And is, into the bargain, as Mills tactfully didn't add, a source of enormous profit to the company which sells it, now Smith-Kline-Beecham.

THICK AS SHIT

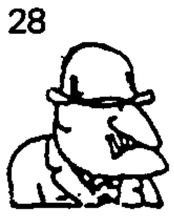
■ WE continue our occasional series on the members of the "working parties" set up by the department of the environment to advise the government on how to protect the environment from industrial pollution. The trick is to spot members who are *not* in the pay of the relevant industry or trade association. This issue we name the working party on SEWAGE SLUDGE.

Mr F. Hughes, British Combustion Equipment Manufacturers Association; Ms J. Hopkins, National Association of Waste Disposal Contractors; Mr S. Minett, ETSU; Ms G. Bramley, Water Services Association; Mr J. Cockburn, Grampian Water Services; Mr R. Hibberd, Yorkshire Water Services; Dr C.T. Chamberlain, Evans Universal Ltd; Mr P. Venn, North West Water Engineering.

HOW long can Tony Craig go on persuading the mainstream media to give him enormous free publicity for his crackpot plans to set up a vibrant community on a desert island?

The latest absurd hype appeared in the *Independent on Sunday*'s Review on 17 December where Emma Cook took three pages to puff Craig and his dreams of a "safe environment for children" — without making a single reference to his unusual banking arrangements or his early family life, including the awkward allegations of abuse made against him by his daughter, whose existence he denies. It was all in the *Eye* on 1 December.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183



In the City

WHAT a surprise! The Department of Timidity & Inaction is reportedly winding down its second insider dealing investigation into those lucky people who bought shares in Anglia TV ahead of the bid almost two years ago from MAI.

Once again it seems — as with the first probe into the percipient and highly profitable purchases of Anglia shares by Lord Archer for his friend Broosk Saib — the investigation of purchases by the great story-teller's friend Karen Morgan Thomas and others has also found no ground for a criminal prosecution.

Now naturally that could well be because there is no evidence that anyone had any inside information and dealt on it. On the other hand it could be — as has been the case time after time — that there is evidence but insufficient to meet the criminal test of "beyond a reasonable doubt".

What is beyond any reasonable doubt is that there was a "leak" of information concerning the MAI bid. Share price and turnover movements in the month before the January 1994 bid accurately mirrored the progress of the discussions between MAI and Anglia and the deliberations in the Anglia boardroom, one of whose inhabitants was Lady Archer. The fragrant Mary denies ever telling garrulous Jeffrey who denies ever knowing and so could never have told anyone else or used the information.

So there it is. Another DTI dead end appears to beckon unless the final interviews in what has been a seven-month investigation provide a breakthrough.

Since 1986 when it could appoint inspectors to investigate allegations of insider dealing the DTI has done so in some 50 cases. This represented the thin end of a 150-case wedge passed on by the Stock Exchange as suspected insider dealing cases. As former DTI minister Nicholas Ridley told a Commons committee in 1990: "We would not appoint inspectors... unless there was prima facie sufficient evidence to make it likely that we would find enough to go to a prosecution". In fact the DTI prosecuted in about half the cases where inspectors were appointed. But it failed to convict more than half of those it charged.

Hardly surprising therefore that without a confession or the smoking tape or document the DTI is somewhat gunshy about insider dealing prosecutions. Yet still the government and the DTI resist following the American example of pursuing insider dealers either civilly or criminally or both despite overwhelming evidence of its effectiveness.

Compare for example how the Securities & Exchange Commission has dealt with allegations of insider trading ahead of the August 1994 merger between defence groups Lockheed and Martin Marietta. The SEC's muscle is that it can and does settle insider dealing cases by the target making reparation without admitting wrongdoing. This avoids the costs of a lengthy legal battle. It also in many cases means no criminal action.

So far the SEC has brought three civil actions for insider dealing in Lockheed shares. Earlier this year a Lockheed lawyer settled with the SEC by paying $86,500 (£56,200). Then this month a Lockheed executive's therapist settled an SEC action and pleaded guilty to a related criminal charge. The therapist has agreed to pay $110,000 (£71,400), twice the profit he made from using what he learned in confidence. And he could go to prison for at least six months and be fined up to $1 million. The therapist's partner, with whom he shared the tip and who made $120,000, has yet to settle.

So, while two years later the DTI is still pondering supposed "prima facie" evidence of insider trades in Anglia, the SEC in 16 months has two Lockheed cases down and one to go plus almost $200,000 (£130,000) in the bank from the bad guys. Most observers would consider that fairly convincing evidence — along with the total of more than $2 billion (£1.3 billion) recovered by the SEC since 1987 — that the US system works while the British system does not. However, there is no intention of making any change, so the City's ever active rings of insider dealers can look forward to yet another happy new year.

IT IS not just with insider dealing that the American way is manifestly the right way. American judges, especially in the federal courts, take fraud very, very seriously — unlike those who inappropriately gave Roger Levitt (Mr Justice Laws), Terry Ramsden (Judge Pownall) or Michael Ward (Judge Mota Singh) suspended sentences or community service.

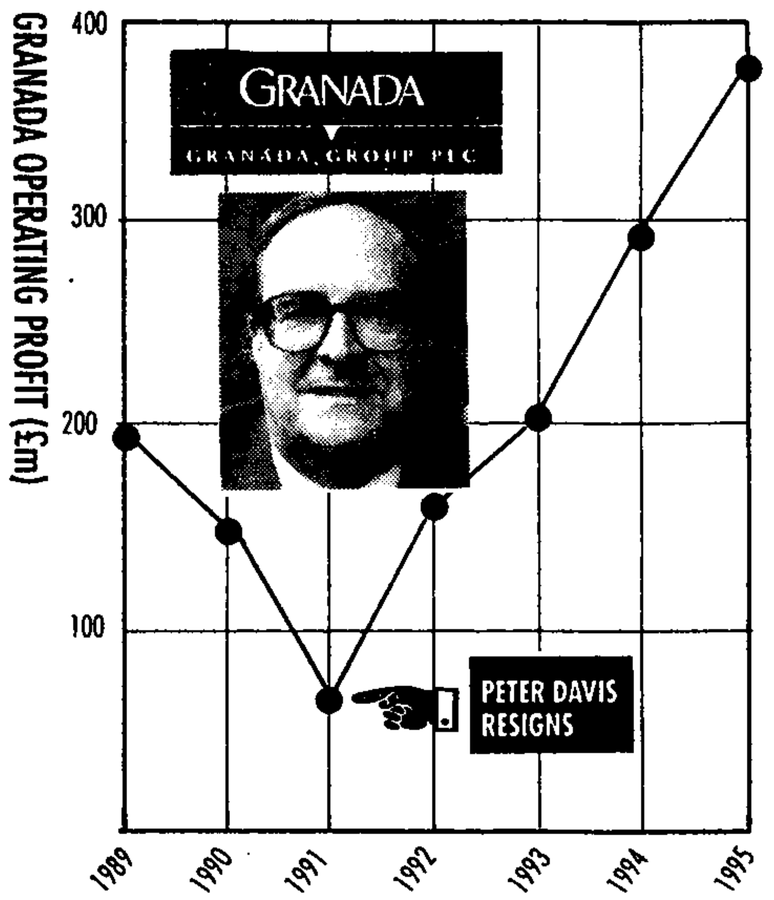
Just before Christmas a Beverley Hills lawyer, Gary Lefkowitz, was jailed for a record 24 years after being convicted of bilking 5,000 investors out of $80 (£52) million via a tax shelter fraud. The collapse of Lefkowitz's Citi Equity Group also cost creditors and the US government a further $40 million.

This sentence compares with the 10 years — a British record and seen as a necessary exemplary punishment — given to Peter Clowes by Mr Justice Phillips for costing 15,500 investors £153 million, a tab that the taxpayer had to pick up because of the abject failings of the DTI. But maybe things are changing. Last week ex-solicitor Graham Durnford Ford was also hit with 10 years for an £8 million fraud.

IT IS not only the Americans who can teach Britain a thing or too about handling fraud. It is hard to imagine Nick Leeson returning to Britain, pleading guilty and being jailed for more than six years, all in less than two weeks, after breaking Barings. But then that's what happens when you can cut plea bargains and there are no juries to be bamboozled or bored by lawyers for whom 100-day trials are a mega-earner with the possibility that the guilty suit will walk free because the jurors are confused by the smokescreen of obfuscation or are looking for someone to punish for their enforced detention. Facing a judge alone who carries a big sentencing stick sure concentrates the mind and saves a great deal of taxpayers' money. A point Lord Roskill's review of fraud trials made years ago to no effect.

DETAILS HAVE now emerged regarding the financing of the new Levitt Towers in St John's Wood Road, Maida Vale. The house, which cost between £800,000 and £850,000, has indeed been acquired in the name of Levitt's wife Diana. And, as suggested in *Eye* 882, the friendly Nationwide Building Society has lent a helping hand.

British Management Part 31.
PETER DAVIS, Director Boots plc and Prudential Corp.
Former Chairman and Chief Executive Reed International.
Director Granada Group plc until 1991.



But so too, it seems, has the mysterious Theriac Trust which will have a charge on the property along with the Nationwide. Theriac, which is administered from Zurich, also had a charge on the previous *chez* Levitt in nearby Circus Road. That property, it is suggested, has been sold for around £910,000, somewhat more than the £750,000 purchase price but less than that plus what was claimed had been spent on refurbishments.

The Levitts were only tenants there of former Levitt Group executive Trevor Owen. Strangely Diana Levitt could prevent Owen selling — perhaps because of Theriac's part-financing of the Owen purchase.

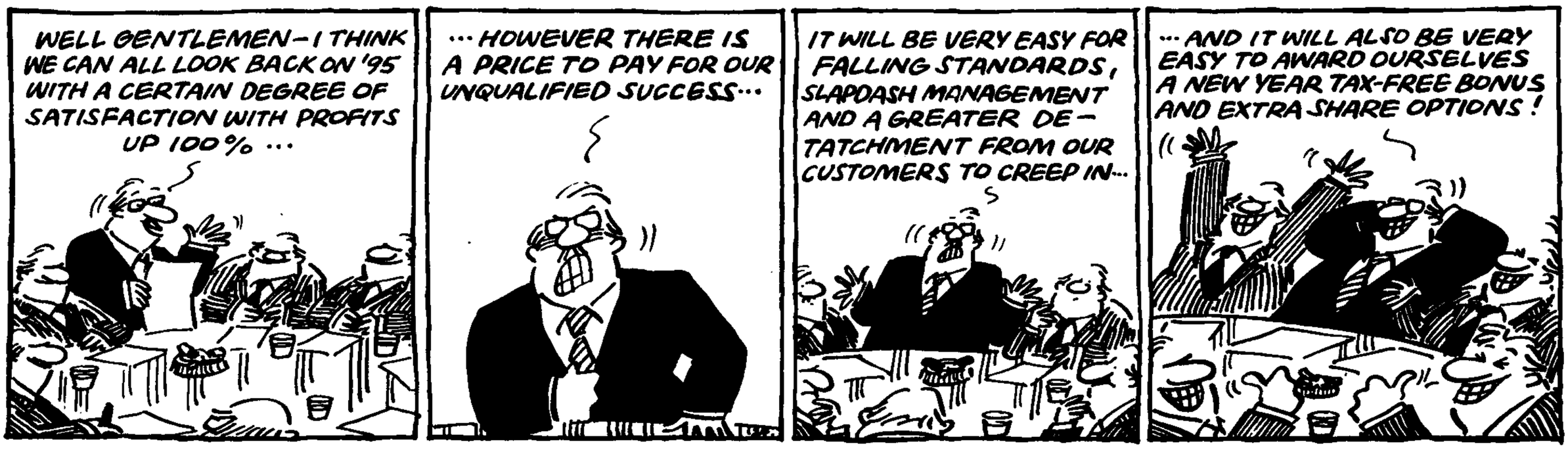
Just who is behind Theriac and why it should continue to support the "thoroughly dishonest" Levitt to the tune of maybe £600,000 remains unclear. However, there is one clue. The solicitors acting for Theriac would seem to be Princess Diana's advisers, Mishcon de Reya, and their client would seem to be someone called Posen.

Perhaps some relation to elusive London businessman Felix Posen, who once worked as a senior executive for fugitive commodity trader Marc Rich and who had dealings with Levitt in the good old days. Posen has recently been involved in a messy legal dispute at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies where he is a governor and fundraiser. Clearly Mr Posen is a very benevolent and forgiving man.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE


WELL GENTLEMEN – I THINK WE CAN ALL LOOK BACK ON '95 WITH A CERTAIN DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH PROFITS UP 100% ...
... HOWEVER THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY FOR OUR UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS...
IT WILL BE VERY EASY FOR FALLING STANDARDS, SLAPDASH MANAGEMENT AND A GREATER DE-TATCHMENT FROM OUR CUSTOMERS TO CREEP IN...
... AND IT WILL ALSO BE VERY EASY TO AWARD OURSELVES A NEW YEAR TAX-FREE BONUS AND EXTRA SHARE OPTIONS!

NI NEW INTERNATIONALIST MAGAZINE

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SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray. See Page 30.

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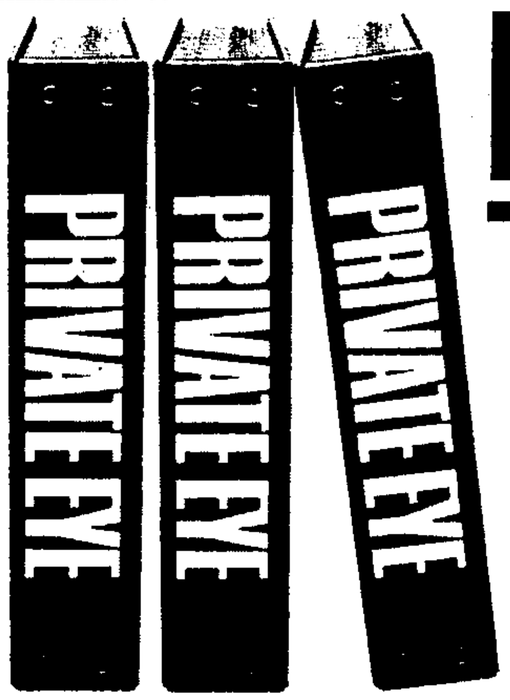

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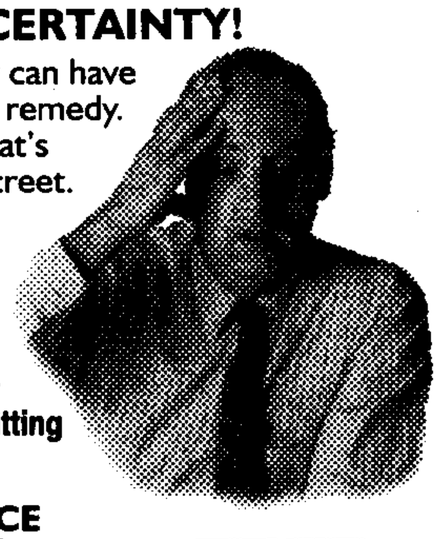

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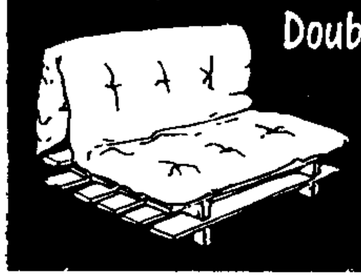

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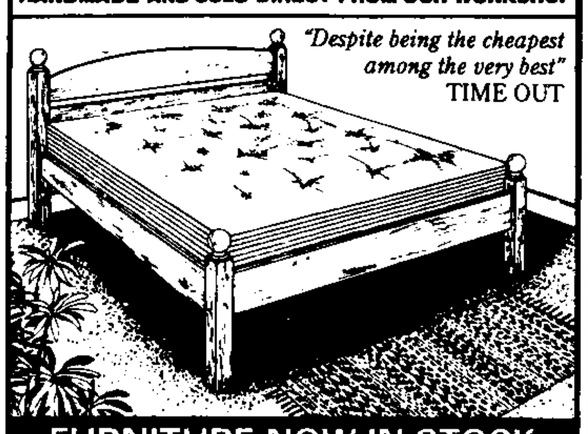

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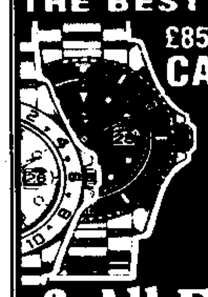

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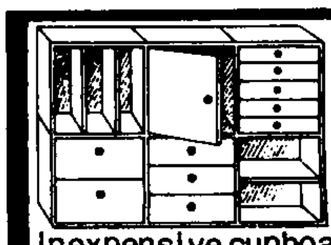

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Please complete in block capitals

1. Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Ms ❒

Surname:_____

First Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

_____ Post Code:_____

Tel No._____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Religion:_____

Age:_____

Place of Birth:_____

Do you have children of your own?

Yes ❒ No ❒

If yes, how many live with you?_____

3. Your personal details

Height:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Hair colour:_____

Dress/Looks: casual ❒ fashionable ❒

elegant ❒ sporty ❒

4. Your work

Present job:_____

Self-employed ❒ employed ❒

civil servant ❒ manual worker ❒

part-time ❒ not working ❒

unemployed ❒ in-training ❒

Schooling

O levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒

Further Education ❒ Polytechnic ❒

University ❒ Business School ❒

Other:_____

5. Your Personality

❒ Warmhearted ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

6. How would people who know you best describe you?

❒ always ready for a joke
❒ somewhat dreamy
❒ never has problems
❒ takes life a bit too seriously
❒ not easily upset
❒ always active
❒ chatty

7. Your interests

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Drinking
❒ Science/Tech ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ Homemaking
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Countryside

8. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:____ Maximum age:_____

Height: min._____ max.____ Don't mind ❒

Children?

Yes, at home ❒ Yes, living elsewhere ❒

None ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Don't mind ❒

9. Which of the three pictures do you prefer? (tick the box)

Dept. PE 46

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL *or call us now on 071 938 1011*

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle St, London W1. 0171-437 4017. Printed by East End Offset Ltd, Empson St, London E3 3LT. Distributed by P.E. Distribution, Mortimer Hse, 230/236 Lavender Hill, London SW11. 0171-223 9971

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